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THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way"—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

—The Voice of the Silence

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"THUS HAVE I HEARD"—

So many proven facts have been first discovered by occult science, that some day we shall have professors of occult science, as we already have professors of chemistry and astronomy.—*BALZAC, Cousin Pons.*

Honoré de Balzac is famous for the gallery of characters that he created with profound imagination based upon acute observation. In his oration at Balzac's funeral, Victor Hugo stressed the fact of these two powers of the great painter in prose. But Balzac has also been called the unconscious occultist of French literature. This is an aspect in the author's prodigious output which is very much overlooked. The abnormal and the psychic elements in his writings are not rare. These are not confined, as is ordinarily believed, to his *Séraphita* which was praised and damned as was no other volume of Balzac's.

Now comes the news of the publication of the first draft of his unfinished early novel *Falthurne*, ably edited by M. Pierre-Georges Castex and published by Jose Corti. Its discerning reviewer in *The Times Literary Supplement* for 25th May reports:—

M. Castex has also studied Balzac's interest in the occult and lays just emphasis upon it; the realist and the analyst in Balzac have been studied too exclusively. There is another Balzac, who never died—the Romantic with his dreams of the magical arcana.

In *Séraphita* Balzac puts in the mouth of one of his characters the truth: "You call a fact supernatural because you did not know its cause." In many of his stories "the supernatural" is handled by Balzac with consummate skill and rare insight. The significance of this "supernatural" is often missed by the ordinary reader and so the real meaning of Balzac's writing is also missed. His observation of objects and events was accurate and the details and similes in his descriptions have an amazing quality which

strikes the readers' understanding. These have a profound philosophical background. This was due to his Imagination or Intuitive Vision.

He perceived the universe of Spirit, the Macrocosm, by the soul-power of imagination while his keen and penetrating senses observed the material Microcosm. In his writings he used both of his powers in a conjoint action revealing again and again the intimate connection between heaven and hell in man on earth. The great fundamental idea, "as above so below" was so assimilated by his mind that most naturally it leaped to conclusions derived from his application of the law of Correspondence and Analogy. Thus he got at such Eastern teachings as Karma, Reincarnation, etc., as will be seen from these extracts—one from *The Magic Skin* and the others from *Séraphita* :—

"Some day you will lie on your couch, unable to endure noise or light, condemned to live in a sort of tomb, and you will suffer unheard of torture. When you look about for the cause of that slow, avenging agony, remember the woes that you have scattered broadcast on your passage through life. Having sown imprecations everywhere, you will reap hatred. We are the judges, the executioners, of a tribunal that holds sway here on earth, and takes rank above the tribunals or men, below that of God."

"Who knows how many fleshy forms the heir of heaven occupies before he can be brought to understand the value of that silence and solitude whose starry plains are but the vestibule of spiritual worlds."

"The virtues we acquire, which develop slowly within us, are the invisible links which bind each one of our existences to the others—existences which the spirit alone remembers, for matter has no memory for spiritual things. Thought alone holds the tradition of the bygone life. The endless legacy of the past to the present is the secret source of human genius."

"We are born to aspire skywards. Our native home, like a mother's face, never frightens its children."

"Light gave birth to melody, and melody to light; colours were both light and melody; motion was number endowed by the Word; in short, everything was at once sonorous, diaphanous and mobile; so that, everything existing in everything else, extension knew no limits, and the angels could traverse it everywhere to the utmost depths of the infinite."

FREEDOM AND CULTURE

[It is a dark but not a hopeless picture of the contemporary world which is drawn here by **Dr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar,** an Indian literary critic of standing. It recalls what Madame H. P. Blavatsky wrote in an article on "The Fall of Ideals" in 1889, that "Freedom, or Liberty, is but a vain word just now all over the civilized globe; freedom is but a cunning synonym for oppression of the people in the name of the people." She was writing about Hugo's grandiose concept, in his posthumous poem "Satan," of the redemption of the fallen Archangel, "the ideal synthesis of all discordant forces," which redemption comes about through the undying spark of "love for humanity, an ardent aspiration for a universal reign of Justice." And in her article she referred, as Dr. Iyengar does here, to the great characters who have from time to time appeared on earth and "taught mankind to look beyond the veil of illusion" and to realize that the gulf between practical and ideal perfection is not impassable but is one which every individual has it in his power to help to fill. She confirmed thus the faith which he expresses in the possibility of rising to supermanhood: "The new *ideal* human perfection is no dream, but a law of divine nature; and...had Mankind to wait even millions of years, still it must some day reach it and rebecome *a race of gods.*"—ED.]

It is easy to write learnedly on this subject. Latin tags and recondite allusions come readily to hand. Metaphysical speculation is never out of place. Warnings and exhortations are in the traditional style. What is lacking, then in the scholarly approach ? The still small voice of humanity is drowned by the learned din and hardly gets a hearing.

The time is now indeed out of joint, and what is needed to set it right is sense and sincerity and not mere scholarship and debating skill. Is civilization dying ? Has humanity become powerless to give the right response to the challenge of the hour ? Culture is one side of the arch of human achievement; civilization is the other. These words are often loosely used; it will be convenient here to restrict "civilization" to the glittering material aspects of human achievement and "culture" to its intellectual, moral, æsthetic and spiritual aspects. The "glory" that was Greece: the "grandeur" that was Rome—here we have the two in vivid contrast.

Of course, from matter to spirit is after all a single gamut. To use another metaphor, invisible arteries link the two and when the circulation is impeded serious consequences are inevitable. Modern civilization is an imposing façade, but our splendorous humanistic culture is its life, its soul. Are the fountains of this life slowly drying up ? Is the life-giving spark being extinguished ? We anxiously ask these questions,

and are half-afraid to answer them.

The malady of our times is the failure of the conscience of mankind to keep in effective check the powers for destruction which the phenomenal scientific and technological advances of recent decades have unleashed. Civilization is forging ahead; culture is limping behind. The cords linking them threaten to snap, and the abyss yawns to devour them both. Material progress is ever faster outpacing moral regeneration, and our control over the outer world of Nature's processes is already far in excess of our control over the inner world of frenzy, fanaticism and unbridled lusts. Science is marching ahead with a deafening blare of trumpets, but the chords of authentic humanism are, alas, unheard, and attempts are not wanting to silence them altogether.

The scientific and technological revolution has doubtless achieved much. The landscape has been altered in many places almost beyond recognition. Our habits too have suffered a singular change. The abnormal has become normal, and artificiality has acquired an easy naturalness of its own. Horror and fascination now-a-days keep close company. How wonderful that one should be able to fly like the birds of the air—indeed, faster, faster—and how amazing that one could hear the music and news of the world from one's snug room in an obscure village! The marvels of modern medicine and surgery need no recapitulation. Civilization is a going concern; yet we know all the time that horror lurks just round the corner. Large-scale sabotage is easy; global destruction would be quick and the human material is cheap. With the arts of life, the arts of death too have perfected themselves.

How has this Death-in-Life phenomenon come to be? Why are we gripped by the fear of darkness at the very moment of the noon-bright glory of the sun? May it be because the whole current of civilization is canalized along wrong lines? Is not *waste* the key-word of the atomic age? Is not industry pampering the weak, the vicious, the vainglorious? Are we not living on the capital accumulated by the earth in the course of ages? Are we not suicidally using up coal, oil and the mineral and forest wealth with no thought for the morrow? Are we not even criminally wasting our resources, producing either vain toys or instruments of destruction? Improvident, pugnacious, intoxicated with a false sense of power and security, mankind would appear to be racing down the steep path to Annihilation.

The technological revolution, if it is not to prove a Frankenstein consuming its creator, has to be followed by another, a revolution in the mind and soul of man. Reason should return to our life-ways, and our present notions about the "standard" of living should give place to healthy ideas regarding the meaning and method of life. We need not,

of course, like the Erewhonians, repudiate science and its achievements altogether; but the real benefits of science can be rationally distributed, wastefulness eschewed and the emphasis laid everywhere on life rather than on death. Civilization can be saved if man can be saved; and man can save himself by undergoing a spiritual revolution and releasing its energies for the remaking of the world.

Dazzled as we are by the conquests of science and technology, we are apt to put second things—or last things—first, and thus to view the world upside-down. The printing-machine is a useful invention; but are we wise to assume, or to act as if we assumed, that the machine is more important and more wonderful than the *Gita* or the *Iliad* which it sets up and prints to perfection? The radio set, again, is a marvellous contrivance; but which is the real marvel—the mechanical contrivance or the voice of the singer which it reproduces? Always, at the source, is the individual, his hands capable of producing beauties hitherto undreamt of, his voice having the power to waft the soul to the seventh heaven of felicity and hope immeasurable.

Food, clothing, a roof over our heads, order and good behaviour—these we need, no doubt; but no less do we need beauty and love, right aspiration and golden hours of enchantment and of ecstasy. Music and the dance, poetry and the drama, philosophy and religion, sport and healthy disputation, these are the roses of life, finely scented, beautifully tinted. Life is for living; and for man life is for living well, fruitfully, purposefully. To give the individual freedom to create values is to ensure the conditions under which the Good Life can achieve a natural and full efflorescence. To strait-jacket the individual is to seal up the fountains of the spirit.

Liberty and freedom, like civilization and culture, are terms often loosely used, but here again it would be wise to differentiate between intellectual and spiritual freedom on the one hand and political and economic liberty on the other. A nation may have gained political liberty and may have achieved independence in the economic sphere; and yet, as in Russia today, the people may enjoy little freedom in the personal, spiritual sense. Freedom is the source of all good, and, where freedom is valued and exercised, political slavery and economic inequality cannot long prevail. On the other hand, mere national independence without individual freedom is sure at last to bring about an armour-plated, police-run, totalitarian state sans light, sans hope, sans all that makes life worth living.

Today governments of whatever description—some with greater success, others with less, some aggressively, others apologetically—are trying to secure and exercise wide powers. This is, of course, especially true of the Soviet Leviathan today, as it was terribly true of

Nazi Germany and of Mussolini's Italy. But, indeed, it is difficult for any modern state to resist the temptation to play Leviathan, with or without disguise. Planning and controls are the order of the day. Men are to be rendered wise and moral and studious and temperate through legislation and bureaucratic omniscience. Miles of red tape and mountains of files are to regulate and standardize every aspect of life. Dissent is treason, criticism is conspiracy; even silence is open to grave suspicion. But it is unfortunately forgotten that to impose absolute conformity is to open the way to folly. Says C. K. Allen :—

> Go beyond the reasonable controls of personal liberty, and the reactions of excess, depredation and disrepute of law are truly appalling....A little too much law, and you turn the moderate drinker into a dipsomaniac, the agnostic into a blasphemer....

The individual and society—are basic; the state is but an offshoot, properly a helper and a servant, not a tyrannical master. "The end of the state's compulsion," says Lord Lindsay, "is to give room for the kind of freedom and liberty which are possible only in social life." A state has the broad duty to ensure that law and order are maintained, and that goods are produced adequatley and distributed equitably. But the hierarchies of power and labour need to be reared on the foundations of justice and good-fellowship.

Again and again, when night has seemed unending, when the career of Evil Triumphant has seemed incapable of arrest, when the human race's power of revival seemed near extinction, great individuals—poets, mystics, philosophers, apostles, messiahs—have arisen, felt the failing pulse of civilization, withdrawn for a while into themselves to discover the key to regeneration, and, presently returning to the world, have taught the way to a new life of hope and aspiration and fresh achievement.

Toynbee rightly declares; "Society is a 'field of action' but the *source* of all action is in the individuals composing it." Without adequate elbow-room for the free play of individuality, change and progress will be impossible. Redeem the individual, and you redeem the race and turn its gaze to the far horizons of the future. The tale of evolution is by no means ended, and man may still exceed himself and achieve supermanhood here and now. At any rate the possibility need not be ruled out. Bergson refers to those

> privileged souls who have felt themselves related to all souls and...have addressed themselves to humanity in general in an *élan* of love. The apparition of each of these souls has been like the creation of a new species composed of one unique individual.

These privileged souls are the salt of the earth, and no human agency can foretell where or when they will make their appearance. Poetry and music, philosophy and prophecy

cannot be made to order. A Christ, a Buddha, a Sankara, an Aurobindo, cannot be discovered by Public Service Commissions, and Working Parties cannot concoct the *Agamemnon* or *Sakuntala*, or *Hamlet*.

The bureaucrat may be efficient in his way, but the heights are not for him ; he cannot see or reach them and it is but natural that in his blindness he should deny their very existence. But so long as the bureaucrat does not grow into a tyrant and the state into a Leviathan, the individual is left free to follow the winding pathway to the heights.

Christ said : " Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. " The exhortation is pertinent in the present context. The average politician's pretensions are boundless, and the politician in power is only too ready to demand both the things which are Cæsar's and those that are God's. Monopolist tyranny—as in the totalitarian countries—however it may have come into existence, soon degenerates into a monopoly of wrong, greed, cruelty and oppression. Both ends and means suffer a violent twist. Education becomes a means of perverting the human personality. Culture becomes a Department of State. The arts are mass-produced, and genius is regimented. The nightmare Death-in-Life commences in dead earnest.

Lest such a fate overtake mankind —and this is by no means a chimerical fear—we shall do well to watch the portents and firmly refuse to acquiesce in the suppression of intellectual and spiritual freedom. The individual holds the key to our future destiny. He has carried the torch of culture down the ages, and in his hands it still burns with a steady glow. Nay, more, by achieving, in the fullness of time, individual transformation, he may open wide the doors of Possibility to the race as a whole. " The creative personality, " says Toynbee, " is impelled to transfigure his fellow-men into fellow creators by recreating them in his own image. "

We have witnessed in recent years the Soviet war against God (with its curious counterpart in South India in the Black Shirt campaign) compounded of heat, lies and nonsense, but even such a phenomenon may be interpreted, in M. Maritain's words, as

> the symbol of divine wrath which tolerates the blasphemy of pure negation in order to put an end to the blasphemy of an affirmation which has come to be falsehood on the lips of so many....

Negation, like winter, cleanses the soil, and spring follows winter in regular course. The free mind will not be daunted by distress; the enkindled soil is not lost in the darkness. Assured of intellectual and spiritual freedom—or even, in the absence of that assurance, claiming and exercising such freedom—man can still save civilization. He can raise the arch of human achievement higher still and higher, and create conditions under which humanity, having cast off the many badges of its limitations, can peacefully live the Good Life in terms of beauty, justice and sovereign understanding.

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

WILLIAM MORRIS AND THE EARTHLY PARADISE

[This is a sympathetic study by **Mr. Philip Henderson,** English poet, critic and essayist, of William Morris, that ardent if not wholly consistent champion of human values against the machine. The products of industrialism may have risen in artistic merit to some extent since his day, but its blighting effects upon the factory worker persist. The voices of Ruskin and Morris have long been stilled, but the 20th century also has had its champions of handicraft. One of the most earnest of these was the late Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy. He declared in his *Art and Swadeshi* :—

...the substitution of mechanical production under factory conditions, for hand production under domestic or small workshop conditions, of such things as form the daily environment of our ordinary lives, is directly destructive of culture....The place of machinery in a true civilization should be that of a servant, and not a master....It should save the craftsman from the heaviest and least interesting part of his work; but it should not rob him of that part of his labour which is his very craft. For if it does so rob him, not only is his own intelligence correspondingly destroyed, but the community has to accept an environment æsthetically and spiritually inferior, an environment that certainly does not express or produce what we understand by culture.

So on this proposition the æsthetes and a great lover of his kind agree. —ED.]

"Both my historical studies and my practical conflict with the philistinism of modern society have *forced* on me the conviction that art cannot have a real life and growth under the present system of commercialism and profit-mongering," wrote Morris in a letter to his Austrian friend Andreas Scheu in 1883. "I have tried to develop this view, which is in fact Socialism seen through the eyes of an artist, in various lectures, the first of which I delivered in 1878." Morris's Socialism was always *Socialism seen through the eyes of an artist* and he was driven to it by what he called "the dull squalor of civilization"—by, that is, the industrial civilization of 19th century England. Again, earlier in the same year, we find him writing to C. E. Maurice, the son of the Christian Socialist Frederick Denison Maurice: "Of course, I do not believe in the world being saved by any system,—I only assert the necessity of attacking systems grown corrupt, and no longer leading anywhither: that to my mind is the case with the present system of capital and labour: as all my lectures assert, I have personally been gradually driven to the conclusion that art has been handcuffed by it, and will die out of civilization if the system lasts. That of itself does to me carry with it the condemnation of the whole system, and I admit has

been the thing which has drawn my attention to the subject in general."

This was written at a time when, in France, the Impressionists were producing their most glorious paintings. But Morris, who only liked mediæval or quasi-mediæval art, saw nothing in the Impressionists' work but a foggy blur. In any case, industrialism had spread its squalor far more widely in England than in France, which was still (as it still is) mainly an agricultural country, and the machine had not by then reached anything like its present dominance over the human mind.

But "the dull squalor of civilization" was produced by industrialism and not by capitalism alone. What Morris shut his eyes to most effectually was the fact that a transference of the ownership of the instruments of production from the capitalists to the workers, or their representatives, would not limit the spread of industrialism: it would, in fact, increase it, for the purchasing power, hitherto limited to a comparatively small part of the population, would, with a rising standard of living of the whole population, merely result in a wider demand for those very types of luxury goods which Morris denounced with such prophetical fury. Morris, with his abiding and lifelong vision of the Earthly Paradise, thought that once the present owners of industry were overthrown, the entire population of the country would immediately renounce the corrupt way of life to which the capitalists had condemned them and revert to a rural simplicity, as in the days of Geoffrey Chaucer.

It is easier for us today to see his mistake because many of the social reforms he worked for have come about. Nevertheless, the outward aspect of our lives in the cities has grown steadily more hideous. One of Morris's last public appearances in the year before he died was when he spoke against the scourge of advertising. What would he say of it now? And surely Communism as we now know it has nothing in common with the Earthly Paradise or the world of *News from Nowhere*. Of all things, Morris most abhorred what he called "Bismarckian State Socialism" and he wrote his Utopia, *News from Nowhere*, as a protest against the super-Socialist state of gigantic cities and machines forecast in Edward Bellamy's American Utopia, *Looking Backward*. It is Bellamy's vision rather than Morris's which confronts us in the future, unless our present civilization destroys itself altogether as it appears to be preparing to do.

While it is largely futile to speculate about what Morris's attitude to current affairs would be were he alive today, it is safe to say that he would have been opposed to any form of tyranny and oppression, whether for perpetuating the *status quo* or in enforcing the Communism (which is supposed to be an expression of the collective will of the people) in which he whole-heartedly believed. But let there be no mistake. Morris was an out-and-out

revolutionary. He had adopted Marxism and he had no patience with half-measures. Just as he delighted in the grim world of the Icelandic saga, he might very well, had it come to it in his time, have thrown himself heart and soul into the Communist revolution. At the same time he was peculiarly ill-fitted to a political life, once he realized that Victorian commercial civilization was not going to be so easily destroyed.

His position was the same as that of other European artists and poets who, during the 19th century, threw in their lot with romantic revolution. "But then," he wrote in 1888, "in all the wearisome shilly-shally of party politics I should be absolutely useless: and the immediate end to be gained, the pushing things just a trifle nearer to State Socialism, which when realized seems to me but a dull goal—all this quite sickens me." But by 1888 Morris was already becoming disillusioned. Nevertheless the impetus he gave to Socialism in England, by his example, was immense. When a man of his position, with an Elizabethan house in the Cotswolds and a spacious Georgian mansion on the banks of the Thames at Hammersmith, one of the leading poets of the day along with Browning, Tennyson and Swinburne, the director of a firm of "art-workers"—when he could get up on platforms and stand at street corners preaching Socialism, then even comfortable people were forced to admit that there must be something in what he said. One glance at Morris was sufficient to convince anyone of his integrity, and as he grew older he came to have the appearance of a major prophet.

What was it, then, that Morris really wanted? He said that the starting-point for any reorientation of values is to know what we really want ourselves; and in order to know this "people must search out the meaning of the world and learn how to live in it, and how to deal with each other." From this it is clear that Morris's Communism could hardly be confined within a party programme. In fact, he quarrelled with every party he joined, for he discovered that the sort of people who joined political parties, however idealistic their professed aims, were more concerned with backbiting and blackening one another's characters in a petty struggle for power than in anything else.

His vision is distilled in *News from Nowhere*, which is a picture of ideal Communism, or the Earthly Paradise—the myth that has laid hold on men's hearts in all ages. The emotional appeal of *News from Nowhere*, lies in this myth, which satisfied cravings in man deeper than the rational mind. Morris set his Earthly Paradise in England and his picture of a transfigured London of the future is pure enchantment. But in his account of how the Great Change came about he does not forget his Marx and in one passage even prefigures Fascism. Otherwise, the view of personal relationships

given in this wonderful little book is far in advance of the morality current in his own day. There is a generosity and a nobility in his conceptions which raises his fable to the level of greatness. He also put into this book all his love for the English countryside, and particularly for that part of it he had chosen for his home —the upper reaches of the Thames above Oxford. It is only the finest minds, those most deeply concerned with the lot of humanity in their time, who write Utopias. Morris's *News from Nowhere*, is one of the sanest and noblest Utopias ever written.

It remains to consider Morris's æsthetic philosophy, which was also Socialist. It had its starting-point in Ruskin—in fact, Morris has been described as the militant arm of Ruskin. Both men were appalled at what industrialism had done to England and to those who spent their lives operating the machines—"operatives," as they came to be called. Morris had no use, even, for what is known as labour-saving machinery—machinery, he wrote, "which saves the cost of labour, not the labour itself, which will be expended when saved on tending the machines." The effects of this machine-tending which, for vast numbers of people, has deprived their work of all interest, was evident to Morris in the design and quality of the goods so produced. Nor did he allow his contemporaries to forget—as they were only too willing to forget—the effect of such work on the "operatives" themselves, and his contentions have been amply borne out by the more recent investigations in psychology.

Ruskin had defined beauty in art as the result of man's joy in his work, and to both Ruskin and Morris (though more especially to Morris) art meant everything produced by the hand of man. If work had become for most people simply a soul-destroying drudgery, how could anything they produced be beautiful? —a form of reasoning which has in it the simplicity of profound truth. At Merton Abbey, the workshops of Morris and Co., Morris returned to handicraft and produced textiles, carpets and wall-paper of good design and honest workmanship. The products of Merton Abbey are a triumphant justification of his theories. Once again he had rejected the modern world and returned to the past. On one side his example petered out in the Arts and Crafts movement; on the other, it raised the whole level of industrial design. Ironically, its abiding influence was upon a mode of production he despised.

At this point one has to admit to a contradiction in Morris's thought. While he said, enunciating his Socialist æsthetics: "What business have we with art at all unless all can share it?" it must be pointed out that only the rich could afford the sumptuous productions of Morris & Co. Theoretically, Morris despised luxury in art, but he produced goods which were the last word in

luxury. He spoke and wrote much of popular art—of art " by the people and for the people, to be a joy to the maker and the user."

But when we consider his theories applied to painting we come upon the same contradiction as we did when considering his manufacture. He admired mediæval painting only, and among his contemporaries he admired above all the exotic, pseudo-mediævalism of Burne-Jones, which, by no stretch of imagination, can be called popular art. He also admired Rossetti, who got his models to pose in the clothes of other periods. In the paintings of both Rossetti and Burne-Jones there is a sickliness of sentiment which is quite at variance with the healthy normality of Morris's tastes in other directions. It is, indeed, the later developments of Pre-Raphaelitism that vitiated popular taste in England—where beauty came to be associated with women in mediæval garments drooping in bowers of roses, or sickly knights kneeling in front of the grail.

Morris's attachment to this sort of thing was purely emotional, for any criticism of Burne-Jones threw him into an ungovernable fury. He would not have become so furious, one feels, had he not half-consciously sensed the weakness and illogicality of his own position. He must, surely, have asked himself sometimes what possible connection there was between his Communism and his manufacture of tapestries for the mansions of the rich and stained-glass windows for churches. Was he, in fact, producing art for the people, or selling Pre-Raphaelitism to the *haute bourgeoisie* ?

In reality, he was caught in a trap between his love of a certain kind of art and his advocacy of a social order in which that art would have no place. It is a dilemma that has become more familiar in our own time. And it was, perhaps, to stifle this very awareness that he turned more and more in his last years to the composition of those long romances in that strange, unreadable, archaic prose of his—*The Wood Beyond the World, The Well at the World's End*—books with nostalgic titles in which he continued to yearn for that adventurous simplicity of life which had become impossible in 19th century Europe. In spite of all his politics, it was upon this inner vision of the Earthly Paradise that his strangely unseeing eyes were for ever fixed.

Morris is still a key figure for us because we are still preoccupied with many of his problems. He summed up in himself the predicament of the artist of modern times, for whom there is no place in an increasingly regimented, mechanized society, where the plumber is more important than the poet, or where, when the poet functions at all, he is required to celebrate the achievements of the plumber. Thus, as an artist and a man of imagination, Morris was forced to turn his eyes either to the past, to an age of romance, or to the remote future, though perhaps his chief claim to greatness is in the enormous courage he showed in grappling with the social problems of his time.

PHILIP HENDERSON

BENGALI WRITERS AND WRITING

[The problem of Bengali writers, as presented here by **Shrimati Lila Ray,** herself a discerning student and critic of Bengali literature, is not different in essence from the problem of all Indian writers, and, indeed, of writers everywhere. Perhaps never before have writers been more deeply conscious of their responsibility so to interpret life to their readers as to restore the so largely lost "sense of wholeness," of which Shrimati Lila Ray writes in her closing paragraph.—ED.]

As the world with which they were familiar dissolved about them, Bengali writers, like writers in Europe, found themselves forced to re-examine their artistic values. The assumptions upon which they had grown accustomed to writing ceased to be valid. The readers they knew and with whom they had so much in common were dispersed in the struggle for survival; they no longer had the time or the mind to read. With the new potential readers few of the older writers had much experience in common. They were at a loss. Following the example of English writers, some set out on voyages of exploration, reporting what they found, in stories, novels and experimental forms of verse. Their work was far from perfect and most of it is ephemeral but it has been useful in lighting up the dark landscape through which Bengali writers have had to grope their way. Two questions have dominated the decade and the discussion of various answers has been hot and continuous. Shri Annada Sankar Ray raised these questions as early as 1941 while presiding over the Literature Section of the Prabasi Bangiya Sahitya Sammilan at Jamshedpur. They are: "Literature for what?" "Literature for whom?"

He listed as follows some of the answers proposed to the first question:—

Literature must be written to enrich the culture of the nation so that it may claim an eminent place in the world comity of cultures.

Literature must teach.

Literature must create a social revolution. It must reform society.

It must win freedom for the country.

It must express the mind and heart.

It must purify.

It must lead to a godlike life.

It must sing of divine realization.

The psychological depression and loss of self-confidence which are direct effects of political subjugation lie behind the first answer. It seeks to make literature an organ of national prestige. Shri Atul Gupta spoke of this in 1942 in a presidential address at Benares. He said:—

Until we have social and political freedom, our literature cannot develop freely. Not that political and social freedom necessarily entail the creation of a great literature. Without the birth of a genius it must prove futile. But in the absence of such a free life even

a genius cannot, for lack of the material of creation, fulfil himself or attain his full stature....

It is curious that this school of thought ignores the phenomenon of Rabindranath Tagore. Of him they make an exception, as a great poet whose mighty imagination did duty for experience.

"But writing from experience and writing from imagination," said Ramananda Chatterjee, addressing a Sahitya Sammilan at Vishnupur in the same year, "are two very different things." He said to the revolutionaries :—

Many among those who take part in political movements...want a mass literature. They themselves, of course, are not cultivators, or day-labourers, or skilled workers, but they want a mass literature. It is not that I do not also want the same thing. But where is the mass that can read and create literature ? The common people must first be educated....Maxim Gorky was able to write the stories of those he met....If a mass literature is to be created, if we are to write of the poor, distressed, suffering and disinherited of our country we cannot do it by the help of our imagination alone, sitting comfortably at home. Their sorrows and pleasures must be shared with them....

Eight years later, in 1950, the editor of *Natun Sahitya* suggests that this can be done if writers organize themselves and undertake work "useful to the masses." He is deeply conscious of the social responsibility of literature and lays stress on Realism. This Realism must be neither photographic, naturalistic, nor a fragment of the truth but part of a greater Reality and instinct with the real life of the people. Such Realism, he says, is chiefly to be found in what he describes as Democratic literature, that is, literature which takes rise in an antipathy to Feudalism, Imperialism and the Monopoly Capitalism which accompanies it; it is writing in which the heart of the writer cries out against exploitation, Capitalist greed, atrocities, inhumanity and war mongering. He approvingly quotes the Chinese, Kuo Mo-yo, who wrote in an issue of the magazine :—

Difference of outlook cannot be eliminated all at once so it must be tolerated....The common objective, the service of the masses, is to be achieved through discussion and criticism in artistic and literary circles, through self-examination and the separate efforts of writers and artists. If the present character of the Social Revolution is forgotten, literary judgment is apt to err in its assessments.

The editorial of the *Sahitya Patra* (October 1950) seeks a way out of the difficulty in the rediscovery and re-definition of Bengal's folk tradition, a way denied to Europe for India's folk tradition has survived and is still vital and alive. The various conflicting "isms" of Europe, the editor says, are not valid in the Indian context, for India's awakening has been only partial and she has not been deeply affected by the cultural movements of the West. The common people

retain the ability to trace correspondences between Realism and Symbolism. This folk realism is discernible beneath the religious trappings in Alaol, the *Chandi* and other *Mangal Kavyas* and it is the secret spring of the intellectual realism of Dinabandhu Mitra, Michael Madhusudan Dutt and Kaliprasanna Sinha.

Interest in folk literature has indeed grown steadily and much delightful verse has been written in nursery-rhyme metres and styles. A new category of witty and satirical writing has sprung out of these experiments. Topical exasperations and tensions find in it an effective outlet.

So "while statesmen count Fascists and Communists, sectarian priests look for insignia of creed and the spiritual recluse regards all things as illusion, the poet," wrote Dr. Amiya Chakravarty in the June issue of *Chaturanga*, 1947, "has his eyes and ears open." He went on :—

When philosophies putting forward savage and ugly creeds make their appearance in human society, the time is ripe for the artist's vision. The poet, whose sight is whole, comes and stands in the crowd of the partially blind....

According their full value to the essential human traits he gives the whole, essential Man pride of place. To the poet the petty disparities arising out of partial loyalties—Hindu, Mohammedan, Bengali, Panjabi, national or party—though these may be noteworthy, are irrelevant and it is inevitable that he should care for friend and foe alike in times of distress. Dr. Chakravarty considers the artistic intelligence to be that which gives rise to a sense of wholeness and he concludes that the peculiar function of the poet, when the vision of life in its entirety has been lost in fragmentary political and theological interpretations, is to restore the sense of wholeness.

"The religion of humanity is the natural religion of writers," said Mr. S. Wajid Ali, presiding over the All-Assam Bengali Language and Literature Sammilan in April 1945. "Their task is to give shape to the deepest urges of man, to his joy and sorrow, suffering and pain, hope and expectation." He went on to explain that they were the givers of form, the thinkers, that men now turned to their writers for the inspiration they used to expect from religious leaders. The responsibility of guiding men along the path to goodness, to progress, has devolved upon writers and the seriousness of literature has grown in proportion to its responsibility.

If life as a whole is to be restored again to health and simplicity, fresh ideals of life are necessary from time to time....When, in the life of a people, such a great inspiration comes, all petty differences, hatreds and antipathies are gone with the wind. It is within the power of writers today to bring us this inspiration.

"Therefore the way of the artist is seen to be also the way of the *sadhak*," writes Shri Nandalal Bose in *Silpakatha*, published in 1945 in

the Viswa Vidya series of booklets :—

The artist depicts scenes which both enchant the heart and rend it but he is neither fascinated nor upset by them. Rising free from the clinging tendrils of happiness and sorrow to the source of both in the bliss of being, the living water of life, he creates images of it. Unless this ultimate source is reached, unless creation stems from this bliss, joy and suffering are apt to distort his work....It is through the yoga of his art that the artist pursues his *sadhana*, though he may observe no other form of worship.

Literature for what? All things that have a place in the life of man have a place in literature but not at the expense either of the man or the literature, said Shri Annada Sankar Ray in his speech. The same thought is found in his book, *Binur Boi* (1944). Just as man has been divided up into a great many parts—his mind, his body, his behaviour, his conscious, his subconscious, various complexes and reflexes, leaving nothing over to be merely human, literature too has been split up into a number of things. Literature must remain literature just as man must remain man. A writer, he says, does not write or refrain from writing at will. He writes because he has to, because he has loved man as a whole, as an intact human being, because he has loved humanity and, after humanity, nature.

" Literature for whom ? " Where, in India, is a mass that can read books written for it or even buy books in order to learn to read ? A writer cannot wait for the masses to become educated and affluent. Yet to write for a mere handful of educated people is depressing and brings a sense of futility. Shri Annada Sankar Ray considers that the way out is to write so well that all, as they become literate, will read and understand. The work of a writer, because of its quality, can outlast social and political revolution, just as it can portray joy and suffering without being disfigured by either.

Where is the writer to find this immortal touch that is at the same time the common touch ? Can it be acquired by doing " work useful to the masses " or by preaching social revolution or reform or political change, or in teaching illiterates their alphabets or by singing of divine realization or expounding the godlike life ? It is a touch that will indeed restore the sense of wholeness to life and the person living it, a touch that will lift both writer and reader above joy and suffering, to the well-head of the water of life, freeing them from the fragmentary interpretations of man and of literature, in order that health and simplicity may be reborn and works written that will be read as the works of Tolstoy are read in Russia today, a Russia that did not exist in his lifetime ; as the works of the ancient Greeks are read all over the world. As Bengali writers seek it, their pens are not idle. They write.

LILA RAY

THE TIDES OF LIFE

[In this thoughtful article **Mr. Basil P. Howell, M.B.E.,** presents heartening evidence of the sensitive response of two great modern writers, one on either side of the Atlantic, to the spiritual realities that today, as ever, form the unmoved depths beneath " the froth and spray of the tides of life. "—ED.]

From one point of view, the reconciliation of metaphysics and history is to be found only in the ancient doctrine of reincarnation. For, here, onmiscience and experience meet, and only on this basis do we find any satisfactory explanation of the manifestations of genius. Without delving too deeply into the modes and apprehensions of the creative faculties of the human intellect, and enlarging upon the differentiation between intellectual and spiritual genius, it may be said that the annals of literature, as of other expressions of art, show that " Genius and undeserved suffering prove an immortal Ego and Reincarnation in our world." (H. P. Blavatsky on " Genius," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*)

The present Poet Laureate of England, Mr. John Masefield, certainly intimated his belief and trust in this age-old teaching, when, in his poem " A Creed " he wrote :—

This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust
And turned, as dust, to dust again;
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

And now, in *The Atlantic Monthly*, (March and April 1951), Mr. Masefield writes of the discouragements and excitements which he encountered as a boy and a young man intent on writing, and, in his own admirable way, affords his readers some intimations of the imaginings and fancies, which, he tells us, were intermingled in his mind from earliest infancy " with the reality of the memories of experience. " Before he came to enrich the literature of the world with his published stories, his imagination was painting its own pictures, conveyed to no one but himself.

" At first (and for twenty years and more), " he writes, " I supposed that they were memories of a life that I had lived on earth, in another body, perhaps not long before. " At other times, he wondered " if they were not half-memories of picture-books shown to me in infancy, mixed with half-imaginings of my own. " His description, however, of a vast valley, " much-forested, but with no indicated compass points, " and in which there raged " a dangerous swift turbulent eddying river, " ending in a cataract near to which a track " led into caverns that trended upwards . . . to inhabited caves of different sizes where (in complete safety) men with scanty clothing worked by fires, " is so detailed and circumstantial as to lead the reader to a conviction of its reality in the depths of a consciousness that knows no ceasing.

In philosophical terms, it may be

thought that Mr. Masefield's beautiful references to his earliest childhood demonstrate even more clearly than do his mind-pictures the missing element of rebirth in the synthesis of metaphysics and experience which awaits fulfilment by mankind. He reaches out to the Platonic doctrine of "Ideas." If we need a touchstone to separate out those who do and those who do not believe in the existence of an unseen eternal world from which the visible world draws all its meaning and value, we may find it in Plato's depiction of the soul of a philosopher, which

> will calm passion, and follow reason, and dwell in the contemplation of her, beholding the true and divine (which is not matter of opinion), and thence deriving nourishment. (*Phaedo*, 84)

"Opinion" belongs, indeed, to the changing world of the senses, and the true knowledge is indicated in Mr. Masefield's childhood effort to reach out to the Idea behind all Form.

"All that I looked upon," he says, "was beautiful, and known by me to be beautiful, but also known by me to be, as it were, only the shadow of something much more beautiful, very, very near, and almost to be reached." And then he delights us with an account of the entry—of his consciousness into an ineffable life :—

> Then, on one wonderful day, when I was a little more than five years old, as I stood looking north, over a clump of honeysuckle in flower, I entered that greater life; and that life entered into me with a delight that I can never forget. I found suddenly that I could imagine imaginary beings complete in every detail, with every faculty and possession, and that these imaginations did what I wished for my delight, with an incredible perfection, in a brightness not of this world.

Later, when a young man of seventeen in New York City, in the summer of 1895, Mr. Masefield suddenly found that the faculty of mental story-telling had returned to him: "This resurrection of my inner life was a gladness," and, from then onwards throughout his writing life, he has known that "by instinct and aptitude I am a story-teller." He acknowledged, with generous enthusiasm, the influences of four men especially in the formative years of his life—William Morris, Swinburne, Burne-Jones, and D. G. Rossetti :—

> When men have had much influence, they will be decried and despised by a later set of men; that, being the way men have with their benefactors, is happening now. However, I will back the light against darkness any day, and while I can write at all, I will give thanks for those four men.

"From the Divine All proceeded Amun, the Divine Wisdom...give it not to the unworthy," says a Book of Hermes. In his recognition of greatness in others, as in so much of his work, Mr. Masefield shows the true and innate nature of his own genius. In these days of arid criticism, seeking to reduce all dimensions to its own thumb-nail vision,

it is refreshing to read someone who has the courage to say, as Mr. Masefield does in this chapter of autobiography, "In the old days men sought the sky for stars; now, too many rake the gutters for gossip."

It has been said that, while the idea of rebirth is universally portrayed in myth, custom and dream, "it was not intellectually conceived as a psychological fact until Christ insisted that there was not only a physiological rebirth—born of water, but a psychological rebirth, born of the spirit." Dr. John Hadfield, in his *Psychology and Morals* (London, 1923) then adds: "The importance of psychological rebirth, nowadays virtually lost by the Church, is being rediscovered in psychology." As a matter of historical fact, no less than of mystical judgement, we may dispute the uniqueness of Christ as a Teacher in this respect, for his message is but the reiteration of archaic wisdom enunciated by great spiritual Teachers throughout the ages, in both East and West. Similarly, we may take issue with those who would limit the idea of rebirth in this sense to the experience of one life—a sort of psychological transformation that sees neither before nor after. There can be no significance, in fact, in any teaching along these lines, unless a Hegelian dialectic is brought into operation, and the permanent element in consciousness, life after life, is recognized to be the substratum and ultimate completion of personal phenomena. Only in this light will the vivid incidence of Mr. Masefield's reminiscences be brought into the focus of spiritual intuition, and his attitude to life and its experiences be seen as an expression of modern mysticism.

It is pleasant to be able to associate an American writer with Mr. Masefield in defence of the Highest Self—"the bright destroyer of the dark power of illusion"—as an integral factor in the creative work of a modern writer. On January 14, 1951, *The New York Herald Tribune* Book Review Section printed William Faulkner's magnificent Nobel Prize Award speech, and it was reprinted in *The Saturday Review of Literature* for February 3, 1951. After referring to the Nobel Award as only his "in trust," Mr. Faulkner called upon the young man or woman writing today to

> teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed—love and honour and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice.

If the thought of reincarnation as a fact in Nature did not occur to him, at least Mr. Faulkner made his brave declaration on the side of the spiritual nature of man, root and blossom of the teaching of olden times. His belief is

> that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal...because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance.

Here, indeed, in the living words of Mr. John Masefield and Mr. William Faulkner, is a message for the writers of this day and age, who, too often, fall prey to the cheap cynicism which is but the froth and spray of the tides of life.

BASIL P. HOWELL

TRAINING FOR CITIZENSHIP

A PLEA FOR A NEW OUTLOOK IN EDUCATION

[The urgent need of better preparation for citizenship, for which **Shri K. S. Viswanathan, M. A.**, of Bangalore, Lecturer in English in Vijaya College, pleads in this article is obvious. Giving it at the college and university level is better than not giving it at all, but the universal adult franchise which democracy confers makes most desirable the imparting of such training—the inculcation of the Moral Law, the encouraging of self-discipline, of the spirit of service, of tolerance and of mutual good-will—at all educational levels, as well as the devising of ways and means to bring these lessons to the illiterate majority. Ruskin's question in *Unto This Last*—" . . . whether, among national manufactures, that of Souls of a good quality may not at last turn out a quite leadingly lucrative one "—admits of only one answer —ED.]

With the emergence of India as a Sovereign Democratic Republic there is an imperative need for direct and deliberate training in democracy in our universities. It is unfortunate that this aspect of training is still a Cinderella in the educational household. A major problem facing the world today is that of producing good citizens. India is by no means an exception. Nay, the sweeping changes in the political field have accentuated the need. It is therefore high time that we gave serious thought to this vital aspect of education.

University education in our country has serious drawbacks. It is not fitted to produce competent citizens. It is out-of-date, mechanical and soulless. The sooner it is reoriented the better. It has specialized in producing thousands and thousands of graduates and double graduates who are " Yes men," with very little push, initiative and drive. The Britishers chalked out a scheme of education with the sole intention of training Indians for the rôle of obedient and submissive clerks, stenographers, assistants and private secretaries. The same out-moded and antiquated system of education still prevails in our country.

Nor is this all. Our university education is completely detached from the burning problems of the day. Book knowledge, however profound it might be, cannot in itself make a good citizen. It is a well-known fact that even persons who have made their mark in science or the humanities betray great confusion and prejudice while discussing political problems. Very few of our college students know the fundamental facts of Economics and Politics. They dabble in " isms " without knowing anything about them. A majority of undergraduates, not to speak of graduates with a distinguished academic record are groping

in the dark, not able to form a sensible notion of the U.N.O., not knowing, for instance, the number of ministers in the Central Government or their respective portfolios, not knowing how many of our countrymen have been deputed to other countries as ambassadors. The amusing answers given by holders of degrees and double-degrees in the competitive examinations are striking instances in point.

In short, our universities have made the production of half-educated men a fine art. It is needless to add that this state of affairs is fraught with dire consequences. It has been well said: "We can convince an educated man; we can also convince an ignorant man, but the half-educated never."

Again, the undue importance attached to examinations has been the bane of our educational system. To make matters worse, the portions prescribed are too heavy. The curriculum, moreover, is so rigid and inflexible that it hardly allows the integration of education for citizenship. It is time that something was done to remedy these evils.

Let us consider what qualities are necessary for a competent citizen in a democracy. In the first place, he requires certain moral qualities. He must feel and evince a deep and abiding interest in the welfare of his fellows. This is not all. He must build up sound character. Shri Rajagopalachari put it admirably in his Convocation Address at Lucknow University recently:—

> The main task...before us is to set on the move a big force that will more and more substitute the inner policeman for the one who functions outside, invested with the authority of the State. A people cannot be said to have attained freedom if individual good behaviour and fair dealing always depend on external authority and enforcement. If citizens need always to be watched and controlled the nation must be deemed to be still in bondage. It is only when citizens act rightly on account of the urge of conscience and an inner law that a people can be deemed to be really free.

Another fundamental requirement for the citizen is the quality of tolerance. The spirit of tolerance is in fact the life-blood of democracy. "It is the very essence of civilization." Nay, it is the keystone in the arch of democracy and if this stone is omitted the arch itself will tumble down with a deafening crash. This quality can come only by full and free discussion of all aspects of public affairs.

The most fundamental difference between democracy and dictatorship lies in their respective attitudes to the discussion of political problems. In a dictatorship criticism of the government is looked upon as a monstrous crime. In a democracy well-informed and healthy criticism exerts a most salutary effect. The callous treatment meted out to critics of government in countries like Russia and Germany stands in striking contrast to the politeness shown to His Majesty's Opposition in England.

The citizen must acquire the ability to think clearly. He does not find it difficult to reason cogently while tackling problems in the physical sciences. But he finds it an up-hill task to bring reason to bear upon problems in the social sciences for it is here that his prejudices and prepossessions raise their ugly heads. It is the paramount duty of teachers to aid him in this difficult task of steering clear of passions and grappling with the political problems in a calm, accurate and dispassionate manner. Shri Rajagopalachari rightly observed in his Convocation Address :—

> Clear thinking and correct judgment must be automatic. Foggy thinking, wishful reasoning and all such enemies of truth should be avoided even as a man with a taste for cleanliness automatically avoids dirt. A scientific approach towards all matters where a decision is called for should be made a habit amounting to second nature through the mental training that men and women received at school and college.

There is yet another quality required of a citizen—the ability to take independent views of men and things. It is common knowledge that in our country today many educated persons accept certain things as gospel truths simply because prominent people have said so. How much of nonsense many of us are gulping down our throats under the authority of great names is unthinkable. It is a common joke that Shakespeare might fail in the examination on his plays because so many amusing comments have been made on some of his passages.

The crying need of the hour is that a citizen should form his own judgment and stand by that judgment, in spite of the statements of many others, until facts or arguments are offered to convince him of his error. To praise a thing highly merely because it is the latest fashion to do so is intellectual slavery of the worst type. In short, it should be the primary aim of a citizen to come to his own conclusions without taking anything upon trust. He must at the same time respect the individuality of others.

Equally important is the ability to choose proper leaders and to trust them when chosen. It is an indisputable fact that our political success largely depends upon the stainless rectitude of the public services. The atmosphere today in our country is surcharged with corruption, favouritism, nepotism, self-aggrandizement, greed for power and a host of other ills. The cheap soap-box type of oratory has become a passport to power. Nor is this all. The public are misled in every way because they are a community too large to know their public men except by report. The remedy for the situation lies in a different psychology. A proper regulation of the mind is just the thing required. The voter must make it a point to recognize sound character, efficiency and courage in public men and must prefer the possessors of these virtues to the spe-

cious qualities of spell-binders.

The need for developing an international outlook can hardly be exaggerated. Thanks to the astonishing progress in science the world has shrunk in space. We must recognize that we have responsibilities not only as citizens of our own country but also as citizens of the world. Let us draw inspiration from the noble words of Bertrand Russell :—

> We are not content with a purpose that suits one group at the expense of other groups. Therefore, any narrow patriotism, however necessary it may be at the moment in practice, is not a thing that you can accept as an ideal. The emotion that must inspire our purposes is an emotion of pain in the suffering of others and happiness in their happiness. That is the only emotional basis that is any good.

From the facts stated above it is clear that there is an urgent need for conscious and systematic training in citizenship in our country. The political world is today so complex that it is necessary to impart this kind of training in the same manner as we impart training for a profession. The kind of training to be aimed at is threefold—training in the moral qualities necessary for a citizen, the encouragement of clear thinking on everyday affairs and the acquisition of that knowledge of the modern world usually given by means of courses in history, geography, economics, citizenship and public affairs.

K. S. VISWANATHAN

A CITY REFORMS ITSELF

Under the caption "The Devil and Lynn" Selwyn James describes in the June *Redbook* the fight of Lynn, Massachusetts, a city of a lakh of people, against intolerance. A Jewish lad of 11, a Boy Scout whose father had been killed in action in World War II, was waylaid and fought by six bigger boys because he was a Jew. That was in November 1949. The case was publicized in the press and other instances of intolerance came to light; the civic conscience was touched. A vigorous campaign was launched on numerous fronts. The already formed Community Relations Committee, with Protestant, Catholic and Jewish members, arranged first a "friendship tea" at which women of all races met, heard each other's national songs, chatted for the first time over the teacups, liked each other.

A highly entertaining "Rumour Clinic" visited many local clubs and religious and civic organizations, demonstrating how prejudice distorts facts in the passing on of reports. Parent-Teacher Associations arranged informal meetings at members' homes, where parents agreed to tackle their own prejudices, to drop offensive names for members of other races from their vocabulary and to give up telling jokes which held the others up to ridicule. Text-books were carefully scanned and substitutions made that did not encourage intolerance. School children show more intermingling between racial groups; the boys of a high-school football team of different races refused a coveted trip South rather than accept the challenging Southern team's ban on Negro players. Exchanges of pulpits between denominations continues.

In short, within two years from the public revelation of the evil, Lynn has, by determined and courageous meeting of the issue, not only lived down the unenviable notoriety it had gained, but set a pattern of heart-searching and self-reform for other communities, in America and abroad.

THOMAS TRAHERNE

A LESSON IN LIVING VALUES

[Thomas Traherne, whose spectacular rising on the horizon of mystical writing has seemed the brighter for the preceding centuries of obscuration, has found a sympathetic interpreter of his philosophy of joy in **Dion Byngham,** whose critical appreciations of literature, poetry and art in relation to life have included studies of Blake, Whitman, Jefferies and Ruskin.—ED.]

Towards the end of 1896 the manuscript folios of Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations* and of his poems were purchased for a few pence from an old book-stall in Vigo Street, London, when virtually on their way to the wastepaper mills for destruction. So it chanced that this precious script from the inspired hand of an almost unknown writer and cleric, dating back over 200 years, was saved from oblivion for all those that have since treasured it, but who otherwise would never have even suspected their loss. Curious, too, to reflect how a child born just then in another part of London—the writer of the present article—should, long years afterwards, come to recognize with delight in the published *Meditations* a peculiarly poignant confirmation of his own chastened sense of primal living values.

So little was known about Traherne when the manuscripts were discovered that they were at first supposed to be some unidentified writings of his contemporary, Henry Vaughan. It was not until they had passed through several hands into the eventual possession of Mr. Bertrand Dobell that research in the British Museum Library revealed them to be of the same authorship as a 17th-century published work on *Christian Ethicks* by one Thomas Traherne, B.D. Born, it is conjectured, about 1636 near Hereford, the son of a shoemaker, Traherne entered Brazenose College, Oxford, in 1652. After taking his degrees in Arts and Divinity he was for a time Rector of Credinhill near Hereford. Later he was appointed to a parish at Teddington near Hampton Court and was also Domestic Chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgman, at whose house took place Traherne's early death in 1674 when he could not have been much more than 38 years of age.

This, together with the humble details of his "Last Will and Testament"—two rings bequeathed, one each, to Lady Bridgman and her daughter, a "best hatt" left to his brother Philip, an "old hatt," a few clothes, ten pounds, some odd half-crowns and shillings to be divided among the servants—comprises almost all that is recorded of the outward life and circumstances of Thomas Traherne. That he died a

" poor man " as regards material possessions is evident. But of the inexhaustible riches of his inner life the prose *Meditations*, arranged in five " Centuries " or series of a hundred paragraphs each (though the unfinished " Fifth Century " contains only its first ten); and the many exquisite verse renderings, so providentially brought to light nearly two and a half time-centuries later, enshrine a pellucid and rapturous record.

Since it is not possible within the present limits even to glance at all the facets of his gem-like utterance, it is Traherne's crystal-clear discrimination between true and false riches, his piercingly simple and immediate insight into the nature of true wealth and intrinsic living values, that has been selected as the main theme of this appreciation. For this purpose only the prose *Meditations* will be touched upon, it being generally agreed that, although much of the poetry has unique charm and grace, it is in the prose of Traherne that we find that pristine fount of lyrical beauty, rapt vision and evocative ecstasy, of which the verse is often a repetitive echo—a metrical afterthought and paraphrase.

One passage from the Third of the *Centuries* provides its own revealing glimpse into Traherne's actual way of life (at least for a period) from which might be deduced much that follows :—

When I came into the country, and being seated among silent trees and meads and hills, had all my time in mine own hands, I resolved to spend it all, whatever it cost me, in search of happiness, and to satiate that burning thirst which Nature had enkindled in me from my youth. In which I was so resolute, that I chose rather to live upon ten pounds a year, and to go in leather clothes, and feed upon bread and water, so that I might have all my time clearly to myself, than to keep many thousands per annum in an estate of life where my time would be devoured in care and labour. And God was so pleased to accept of that desire, that from that time to this, I have had all things plentifully provided for me, without any care at all, my very study of Felicity making me more to prosper than all the care in the world. So that through His blessing I live a free and kingly life as if the world were turned again into Eden....

Something more festal than any cut-and-dried creed of " plain living and high thinking " is implicit here, for this was one who could also rejoice in wine as " flowing from His love who gave it unto man. " That, on the other hand, it is no mere avowal of self-centred hedonism all in its context serves to make clear. Another wise teacher of living values, nearly 40 years before Traherne's writings were found, Ruskin, in *Unto This Last*, voiced a parallel attitude:–

We need examples of people who, leaving Heaven to decide whether they are to rise in the world, decide for themselves that they will be happy in it, and have resolved to seek—not greater wealth, but simpler pleasure;

not higher fortune, but deeper felicity; making the first of possessions, self-possession; and honouring themselves in the harmless pride and calm pursuits of peace.

Awaiting—at that time none knew where—its discovery, was the rare testimony of just such an example as Ruskin wished for; one who "will not by the noise of bloody wars advance you to glory: but by the gentle ways of peace and love." And here perchance, nearly another hundred years later, is still—if we would but recognize it—a simple message of supreme purport for our own joyless and strife-ridden age.

To be capable of such pure, innate happiness, such native, unacquisitive felicity, a man must clearly have found some secret of feeling himself "rich" from the start, rich in the sheer gift of conscious, incarnate *being*, apart from any conditional getting or added gain. This was indeed Traherne's open secret. The vital quick of his sense of values was, first of all, his wondering joy in and gratitude for what most of mankind—alas!—takes so blindly and forgetfully *for granted*. "What a confluence of thoughts, wonders and joys, raised out of nothing!" Here, verily is a wealth of marvels at which few pause to marvel:—

My limbs and members, when rightly prized, are comparable to fine gold, but they exceed it. The topaz of Ethiopia and the gold of Ophir are not to be compared to them. What diamonds are equal to my eyes; what labyrinths to my ears; what gates of ivory, or ruby leaves to the double portal of my lips and teeth? Is not sight a jewel? Is not hearing a treasure? Is not speech a glory? O my Lord pardon my ingratitude, and pity my dullness who am not sensible of these gifts! The freedom of thy bounty hath deceived me. These things were too near to be considered. Thou presentedst me with Thy blessings, and I was not aware. But now I give thanks and adore and praise Thee for thine inestimable favours....O what Joy, what Delight and Jubilee should there always be, would men prize the gifts of God according to their value!

Likewise he reminds us:—

By the very right of your senses you enjoy the World. Is not the beauty of the Hemisphere present to your eye? Doth not the glory of the Sun pay tribute to your sight? Do not the stars shed influences to perfect the Air? Is not that a marvellous body to breathe in?...If you be negligent in prizing these, you will be negligent in prizing all. For there is a disease in him that despiseth present mercies, which till it be cured, he can never be happy....

For an epitome of this primal praise of essentials we might compare the refrain from the *Upanishad* in Aśvapati's Instruction:—

O happy family thine. Thou eatest food.
Thou seest what is lovely to behold.
He—this one, that one—in thy family
Has food and what is lovely sees....

A clinching affirmation of these primal values leaves no doubt that had Traherne's native environment been that of, say, India instead of England, even those leather gar-

ments would have been rendered superfluous. After explaining how the desire for riches was removed from him early and how he came to desire no other riches for his friends but those which cannot be abused—" to wit, the true treasures, God, Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, with the riches of wisdom and grace to enjoy them "—he comes out with this delightful idea :—

For when all the things are gone which man can give, a man is still as rich as Adam was in Eden, who was naked there. A naked man is the richest creature in all worlds, and can never be happy till he sees the riches of his nakedness.

Surely a daringly unorthodox dictum for a 17th-century English clergyman ! But so-called barbarous people that go naked, drink water and live upon roots might, in Traherne's estimation, " come nearer to Adam, God and the Angels in the simplicity of their wealth." None of these, he declares, is more absurdly barbarous than the Christian world. In their ignorance some may barter for beads and bits of brass with our merchants. " But we pass them in barbarous opinions and monstrous apprehensions, which we nickname civility." It might be of ourselves today that he asseverates :—

These barbarous inventions spoil your knowledge. They put grubs and worms in mens' heads that are enemies of all pure apprehensions and eat out all their happiness. They make it impossible to believe there is any excellency in the Works of God, or to taste any sweetness in the nobility of Nature, or to prize any common, though never so great a blessing. They alienate men from the Life of God and at last make them to live without God in the world.

The riches of Nature are our Souls and Bodies, with all their faculties, senses and enjoyments.

We have not taken the first step towards civilized living values until we remember this proposition advanced by Thomas Traherne in his *Centuries of Meditation.* Nay, we have stepped backward by forgetting it. It will be evident that, mystic as he was, Traherne's major key-note, his ever-recurrent and dominant theme, was a pure and passionate living enjoyment of the world. He might perhaps have agreed in a later day with that pithy remark of Samuel Butler: " All animals, excepting man, know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it. " Indeed in his own words Traherne had said as much :—

Above all trades and occupations this is the greatest of all affairs. Whatever else we do, it is only in order to this end that we may conveniently enjoy the world, and God within it; which is the sovereign employment including and crowning all.

But it is with senses transmuted into instruments of the spirit in a world essentialized to its primal reality that alone such enjoyment can be tasted. In this is the paradox that in order to enjoy the world we must contemn the world. How can these contraries be reconciled; how

shall we contemn what we were born to enjoy? Truly, says Traherne, there are two worlds:—

One was made by God, the other by men. That made by God was great and beautiful. Before the Fall it was Adam's joy. That made by men is a Babel of confusions, invented riches, pomps and vanities, brought in by Sin. We must leave the one that we may enjoy the other....

That is the choice. For what are "the Fall" and "Sin" essentially but the corrupt mischoice of false instead of true values and the greedy pursuit of these delusive addictions, leading to loss of our innate sense of living reality? "I must lead you out of this into another world to learn your wants."

As indicative indeed of a superb contrapuntal balance in the thought of Traherne, we find an uniquely illumined sequence of meditations on the theme of wants:—

As pictures are made curious by lights and shades, which without shades could not be: so is felicity composed of wants and supplies....Were there no needs, wants would be wanting themselves, and supplies superfluous....

God Himself from all Eternity wanted like a God:—

He wanted the communication of His divine essence, and persons to enjoy it. He wanted Worlds, He wanted spectators, He wanted joys....He wanted, yet He wanted not, for He had them....This is very strange that God should want...yet very plain. Want is the fountain of all His fulness.... Infinite want is the very ground of infinite treasure....Infinite Wants satisfied produce infinite Joys....*The Desire Satisfied is a Tree of Life*....This is a lesson long enough: which you may be all your life in learning, and to all Eternity in practising. *Be sensible of your wants, that you may be sensible of your treasures.*

Of God, whose wants are as lively as His enjoyments and always present with Him, for His life is perfect and He feels them both, it is affirmed significantly: "As this enlargeth His life, so it *infuseth a value.*" Wants are, therefore, "bands and cements between God and us." Crucially, he adds: "Be present with your want of a Deity, and you shall be present with the Deity."

Seldom perhaps, except by a few fellow-Seers like William Blake (who expresses similar insights, almost word for word) has the meaning of want or desire been understood so redemptively. Backed by that dimension of transcendence which must ever be inseparable from its true evaluation, we may find here the needed counterbalance to the stress on indifference in some Vedantic teachings which, for the present writer so far, has remained unresolvable. Wants may be blessings or curses, according to how we conceive them. From real need, from discriminative desire, true value is emergent. "We needed Heaven and Earth, our senses, such souls and such bodies, with infinite riches in the Image of God to be enjoyed." Because, further:—

Life without objects is sensible emptiness, and there is no greater misery than Death or Nothing. Objects without love are the delusion of life. The Objects of Love are its greatest treasures: and without Love it is impossible they should be treasures....

Still the counterpart to all wise and redemptive wanting is first and always gratitude for having :—

Can you then be Righteous, unless you be just in rendering to Things their due esteem ? All things were made to be yours, and you are made to prize them according to their value : which is your office and duty, the end for which you were created, and the means whereby you enjoy....For then we please God when we are most like Him. We are like Him when our minds are in frame. Our minds are in frame when our thoughts are like His. And our thoughts are like His when we have such conceptions of all objects as God hath, and prize all things according to their value. For God doth prize all things rightly, which is the Key that opens into the very thoughts of His bosom....

" Things prized are things enjoyed," each and all in their proper places, " from the sun to a sand, from a cherubim to a worm. " Above all, says Traherne :

I will ever prize what I have and so much the more because I have it. A daily joy, a common joy, are all the more joys for being continuous and common. But as a little grit in the eye destroys the sight of the very heavens, so a little malice or envy shuts out a world of joys. Yet why should there be envy, since in the realm of these riches, all is wholly given to each in being given to everyone.

In Heaven, he declares, they prize blessings when they have them, on Earth they have and prize not, in Hell they prize and have not. If Earth and Hell are too often alike, is the cause far to seek ?

Can any ingratitude be more damned...or folly greater than that which bereaves us of infinite treasures ? They despise them merely because they have them. And invent ways to make themselves miserable in the presence of riches....All which proceed from the corruption of Men and their mistake in the choice of riches: for having refused those which God made...they invented scarce and rare, insufficient and hard to be gotten....And though they are all mad, yet having made a combination they seem wise ; and it is a hard matter to persuade them either to Truth or Reason.... For by this means they have let in broils and dissatisfactions into the world, and are ready to devour one another...violence, fraud, theft, pride and danger, drowning the peace and beauty of nature as waters cover the sea. O how they are ready to sink always under the burden of devised wants ! Verily, the prospect of their ugly errors is able to turn one's stomach: they are so hideous and deformed....

Ever in search of false satisfactions, men labour in the very fire and after all reap but vanity. Did we not daily see it, he exclaims, it would be incredible !

Men rejoice in a piece of gold more than in the sun. Nor shall the air itself be counted anything, though a work of God so divine by reason of its

precious and pure transparency that all worlds would be worth nothing without such a treasure....

These "riches of the Light," these Works of God which are the portion and inheritance of all His sons, are rejected for the "riches of Darkness...."

For the poison they drank hath infatuated their fancies, and now they know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in Darkness. *All the foundations of the Earth are out of course. It is safety not to be with them:* and a great part of Happiness is to be freed from their seducing and enslaving errors.

Yet "we need nothing but open eyes to be ravished like the cherubims." It might be Kabir, tasting "the Joy within all enjoyments," and again the English seer Blake, for whom "When the Doors of Perception are cleansed everything will appear as it is, Infinite" and "Eternity is in love with the productions of Time." Contemplation *sub specie æternitatis* is the essence of such vital evaluation. Says Traherne: "All objects are in God eternal: which we by perfecting our faculties are made to enjoy." Granted the simplest everyday needs, all the true riches of living good and beauty may then be enjoyed by each, without depriving any. For participation in these intrinsic treasures is limited by nothing but the inherent capacity so to participate. The more this is shared the more there is to share. Perceived in this way, the world becomes indeed "the beautiful frontispiece of Eternity."

Surely in these pages of sequential *Meditations* we have some of the most sustained soul-rhapsody ever written, yet also for the most part rooted deep in the soil of commonsense. To attempt to distil them in a few paragraphs of tidy quotation and terse comment is like dipping a pint measure into the ocean. Where in the *Meditations* there is repetition it occurs in much the same way, and with similar effect, as in the thematic variations of some great music. Like a torrential symphony, themes indicated by sequences of preliminary movements burst into climaxes of revelation in their culminating passages:—

You never enjoy the world aright, till the Sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the Heavens, and crowned with the Stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you....Till your spirit filleth the whole world...till you are intimately acquainted with that shady nothing out of which the world was made....Till you remember how lately you were made, and how wonderful it was when you came into it....Yet further, you never enjoy the world aright, till you so love the beauty of enjoying it that you are covetous and earnest to persuade others to enjoy it. And so perfectly hate the abominable corruption of men in despising it, that you had rather suffer the flames of Hell than willingly be guilty of their error ....The world is a mirror of infinite Beauty, yet no man sees it. It is a Temple of Majesty, yet no man regards it. It is a region of Light and Peace, did not men disquiet it. It is the Paradise of God....

DION BYNGHAM

TAGORE'S TECHNIQUE FOR TRUTH

[Prominent among the aims of THE ARYAN PATH is to help to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions. This aim is served by such an article as that which we publish here from the pen of **Shri Gurdial Mallik,** long an active worker at Santiniketan and a devoted follower of its Founder, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore.—ED.]

August 7th, 1941, 12-35 p.m. The telephone bell of the Santiniketan office buzzed. Someone from Calcutta said tearfully "Gurudeva has passed away!"

We were stunned, though the medical bulletins about him during the preceding two days had given us no appreciable degree of hope about his ultimate recovery from the after-effects of the serious surgical operation performed a few days earlier. Maybe our own love for him had made us feel, despite the daily testimony of death, that a person like Gurudeva can never die! The rain, which had been falling since the evening before, increased its tempo, as if Nature too, in company with the inmates of Santiniketan, desired to relieve the tension of sorrow by shedding tears in profusion.

Then evening came, followed by the darkness of night, illuminated with stars. We seemed to feel, for a moment, the peace of the Infinite, in which the finiteness of every kind of human suffering loses its sting. And so, methought, it was the most appropriate hour for communing with the spirit of the singer-and-sage of Santiniketan. To this end, I pulled myself together and sat all alone in the invisible shrine of silence.

Soon after midnight image after image used by Gurudeva in his voluminous works (they say a poet always thinks in images) flitted across my mind in quick succession. I tried hard to catch and hold a few of these so that I might dwell on them a little longer in the light of the stars in which light only can the truths of the soul be studied aright and adequately.

The nest and the sky; the lamp and the light; the stream and the sea; the seed and the tree; the bud and the blossom and the flower and the fruit; the busy bee and the butterfly—such were some of the images which held the centre of my attention for quite a while. And slowly their inner significance trickled through severally, though in the sum total they only emphasized once again the dominant ideal of Gurudeva's life, namely, the completeness of life, as against a partial or particular expression or attainment, which is the usual objective of the very large majority.

This ideal of the completeness of life, he has taught, is achieved through cultivating a relationship between the finite and the Infinite,

between the individual and the Universal, between the soul and the Oversoul, between Man and Nature. For the pursuit of the finite only or of the infinite only, lands a person in the darkness of delusion.

The bird needs, for example, both the nest and the sky if it is to attain to some kind of self-fulfilment: its nest, with its food and fill, gives it physical shelter and security, but it "binds" it within the confines of the cage; it therefore needs the sky so that it may also fly forth into freedom and thus, knowing its inner and larger self, experience something of the joy born of contact with the Boundless.

The stream, to take another image, serves the villagers living on its banks, but finds its fulfilment only when it merges into the boundless sea.

The lamp is "blind" and useless as long as it stores up its oil, but the moment it lets its oil be burnt it gives forth light, the rays of which illuminate all the surroundings, thus fulfilling itself, its small self, in the larger Self, as does the stream on merging into the sea.

The busy bee may be busy all the time in storing honey and it may be feeling pleased with its hoard, but in its miserliness it misses the generosity of the giver. If, however, it were to foster something of the beauty of the butterfly, its stinginess would be transmuted into the wealthiness of the benefactor because, through beauty, it would be helped to contact the beatitude of the Boundless. And so on.

Indeed, Gurudeva only re-taught, I said to myself, the truth enunciated by the sages of the *Upanishads*: "Life is immense." Therefore, in surrendering our individual will to the Sovereign Will—a process hastened if we pursue the ideal of perfection, as against that of possessions—lies the true *dharma* and dynamism of our life.

By this time the morning-bird had announced the dawning of a new day. So, saluting the spirit of Gurudeva in the reverence and radiance of love, I said to myself, "May I re-pledge myself to a life of dedication to the Eternal, the Infinite, the Immense, the Boundless, revealed to us in all those values and visions of life which transcend the precincts of the petty self, in howsoever humble a measure, and however far away from the footlights it may be! For only in this way will God as well as Gurudeva be glorified for ever."

And so, in spite of numerous lapses and "landslides" in the path of my pursuit, I yet continue to hear, now and again, in the depths of my consciousness, the refrain of the song of the village cartman and the seaside boatman, "Lead me across! Lead me across!"

GURDIAL MALLIK

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

A TRIUMPH OF HISTORIC SYNTHESIS *

Dr. Emil Brunner often tells of the good advice that he received, in his student days, from his father: "Never read a book weighing under one kilo." This massive book would pass the most exacting test under such a criterion. Yet it must be said at once that the weightiness is by no means only a matter of avoirdupois. In the first place, the book is part of an even grander whole, for it is the fourth volume of Dr. Durant's tremendous project "The Story of Civilization." The former volumes: *Our Oriental Heritage*; *The Life of Greece; Cæsar and Christ,* have already been widely read and greatly appreciated and the reading of this latest part of the story suggests that the author's skill and power increase with the years. For, in the second place, this is a weighty treatment of a very important era in the history of mankind, many years and episodes of which are less well known by the educated man than would seem likely.

As the reader will soon learn, Dr. Durant is no arid scholar whose material has been culled from the ancient tomes of the research library. He was reared in Roman Catholic schools and, after experimentation with a view to becoming first a newspaperman and then a priest, found his spiritual home in free-thinking circles. After further studies in biology and philosophy he launched out as a lecturer on historical subjects, mainly to working-class audiences. Here he developed the art of clear and pointed exposition which is so well demonstrated in his writing. Later world-wide travels have contributed to the experience and wisdom which informs all his writing.

The present volume covers the milennium from Constantine to Dante. Yet these names do not mean that only the Christian Faith is treated. It is true that in the Roman West and the Byzantine East, respectively, there were great Christian civilizations in this era. Yet it is also the great age of Islam and of later Judaism. Nor does the title mean that only the piety and doctrine of the three religions are discussed. In addition to the faith and morals of the age, politics, economics, education and art are all fairly treated and appraised, and all are subsumed under the primary purpose of giving a total picture of the rich mediæval civilization. If Christianity is, in a sense, the dominant theme, it is set against the background of the great achievements of Islam and the debt of Christian thought to Jewish philosophy is acknowledged in a manner rarely found in most accounts of mediæval civilization. Moreover, the author is less concerned to point morals than to explain causes.

The scheme of the book enables the reader to embark on the considerable discipline of reading with the confidence that he will not be bogged down in a mass of detail or lost in the many cross

* *The Age of Faith.* By WILL DURANT. (Simon and Schuster, New York. xviii + 1196 pp. $7.50).

currents of history. There are five "books" each prefaced with a useful table of relevant dates and events.

Book I, "The Byzantine Zenith," begins with the failure of Julian to revive paganism in the Empire of Constantine and ends with the *apogée* of Eastern Christendom under Justinian. It covers the barbarian triumph over the West and the Persian challenge to the East, and includes a discriminating account of the contribution of Augustine to Christian civilization. Book II, "Islamic Civilization," covers the general ground of the rise and progress of Islam and adds a full account of the many cultural elements in the days of Islamic greatness, to which other writings commonly make reference rather than giving an adequate treatment of them. Book III, "Judaic Civilization," deals similarly with the many-sided contribution of Judaism from 135-1300 A.D. and includes an excellent account of the *Talmud*. Book IV, "The Dark Ages," covers the very difficult period from the iconoclastic controversy to the Crusades, mainly from the point of view of the Christian Empires. Herein is treated the rise of the nations comprising modern Europe and the growing tension between the Christian East and West. Book V, "The Climax of Christianity," covers about half of the total volume. The account of the Crusades leads to a long and careful study of their manifold results in mediæval civilization. Then follows a discussion of the arts and learning of the 12th and 13th centuries, culminating in a critical appreciation of Aquinas and Dante.

Each chapter is marked with notes, numbering as many as 166 in one case, the references being given together at the end of the text and supplying very valuable material for further study on any point raised. There is an excellent index and three useful maps are printed on the end papers.

So much for the mechanics of this book; what of its substance? No doubt there are bound to be limitations in a single volume, however large, which treats of so vast a theme. No doubt the student of each particular era, theme, or person will find occasion to cavil at the necessarily summary treatment. No doubt the mind which feeds on monographs and biographies will take exception to the many generalizations. Yet, when all is said in adverse criticism, this remains a very great achievement. It is an outstanding example of the art by which the well-stored mind, pondering on facts, proves capable of communicating its insights to the many who have no opportunity, otherwise, of covering the vast ground.

To the present reader, the outstanding merit of the book is the author's gift of felicitous compression. To take one simple example—students of Byzantine history will recall how much space is given in most histories to the evaluation of the character of that great but difficult person Theodora, wife of Justinian. Here a brief paragraph surveying the evidence ends:—

> We may reasonably conclude that Theodora began as not quite a lady, and ended as every inch a queen.

That is typical of much in the book —the short pithy sentence, enlivening interest, conveying knowledge, but never sacrificing truth for a cheap joke. A further example of Dr. Durant's economy of style and ripeness of judgment is found at the end of a section treating Byzantine art:—

Never before had an art been so rich in colour, so subtle in symbolism, so exuberant in decoration, so well adapted to quiet the intellect and stir the soul.

Again, when dealing with prayer in the Roman Catholic Church, he begins:—

In every great religion ritual is as necessary as creed. It instructs, nourishes, and often begets, belief; it brings the believer into comforting contact with his god; it charms the senses and the soul with drama, poetry and art; it binds individuals into fellowship and a community by persuading them to share in the same rites, the same songs, the same prayers, at last the same thoughts.

These examples could be multiplied indefinitely, but not at the expense of conveying the impression that the book is merely a collection of epigrams. Rather is the witty, swift-flowing style the servant of the serious purpose of offering a great work of historical integration and synthesis. It cannot be doubted that Dr. Durant has succeeded in his purpose and that many will be grateful for this important new guide to the understanding of both past and present.

We notice that the author plans to publish *The Renaissance and the Reformation* in 1955, and *The Age of Reason* in 1960, thus completing this heroic project. We may well hope that health and circumstance will permit the fulfilment of the plan. Meanwhile this great gift of scholarly interpretation awaits the student of history, and it is to be hoped that public libraries will make easily available a book that ought not to escape notice because the cost is beyond the ordinary private purse.

MARCUS WARD

Bedside Manna: A Book of Meditations. By FRANK W. MOYLE. (Andrew Dakers, Ltd., London. 168 pp. 1951. 8*s.* 6*d.*)

This is a collection of 100 delightfully written short essays, each of which can suitably serve as the matrix and manna of meditation. Each of them, therefore, born of the spirit of stillness and of the stillness of the Spirit in the midst of the heat and dust of daily life, is a potential pillar of strength in the modern age of little or no leisure.

"The spiritual not the material world is our headquarters," says the author and then, through a series of radiant reflections on such subjects as rest, prayer, aspiration, the Kingdom of God, pain, humour, progress and realization, he helps the receptive reader to keep an active contact with the spiritual world. If the busy man of the world is inclined impatiently to retort that he has "no time to stand and stare" at the spiritual world the essayist's answer to him is: "No time for eternity? Come, let us seize the eternity in time" —through communion with God and consecrated service of His children in joy and love abounding.

But *Bedside Manna* is, as the author suggests in his introduction, a book which, as Bacon would say, "should be chewed," certainly not swallowed whole.

G. M.

BERKELEY, THE THEIST *

Last year the present reviewer had the privilege of reviewing the first volume of Bishop Berkeley's Works. Now the third has been published. The seven dialogues which it contains form really one long dialogue: *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*. It was first published in 1732 and the Bishop's Advertisement stated the main idea underlying the dialogue:—

> Whatever they pretend, it is the author's opinion that all those who write either explicitly or by insinuation against the dignity, freedom, and immortality of the human soul, may so far forth be justly said to unhinge the principles of morality, and destroy the means of making men reasonably virtuous.

The 18th century claimed to be the Century of Enlightenment and one of the signs of this enlightenment was to tilt against the dogmas of Christianity and to challenge its claim to Revelation as against the demands of Reason. Freethinking was in the air and Berkeley thought it necessary to take up the cudgels against it. He could have written a cut-and-dried essay refuting the arguments of deists and atheists alike, but, literary man and pupil of Plato that he was, he thought it best to write dialogues in which he vividly set forth arguments against Christianity and then all the more vividly refuted them. The result was *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*.

His characters did not bear the names of the persons he sought to refute, but to his generation the characters he challenged were transparent, and soon after his publication appeared there was a series of replies, but within a short period the controversy subsided. *Alciphron* remains a literary masterpiece, though its philosophical value cannot compare with Butler's *Analogy of Religion*, which is looked upon as a philosophical classic even today, with Paley's *View of the Evidences of Christianity* or with the other and better-known of Berkeley's own writings.

It is difficult to appreciate the enthusiasm with which it was greeted in its day, as recorded by Viscount Percival who wrote that it "was the discourse of the Court, and that yesterday the Queen publicly commended it at her drawing-room"; but this makes it clear that the dialogues must have met some need of the times.

Berkeley was nothing if not an orthodox Christian, and in any attack on Christianity he saw an attack on the basic principles of morality. That is why he looked upon all freethinkers as "minute philosophers," belittling everything of importance in life, and as libertines in thought and in action. He started with the orthodox premise that religion alone can supply an adequate foundation for morality. But attempts had been made to give morality an independent existence as rooted in reason or, as Shaftesbury sought to make out, in a moral sense. In addition to published writings, freethinking was much in the air in coffee-houses and taverns. Berkeley saw danger in all this, and so through written conversations he undertook to meet the challenge to Christianity. On the whole, one is inclined to accept the editor's summing up:—

> His *Alciphron* is a model of the psychology

* *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*. Vol. III. Edited by T. E. Jessop. (Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., London. 337 pp. 1950. 30s.)

and logic of controversy, and to a large degree of the ethics of it too. No other apologetic work known to me has stated the objections to Christianity so fully, cogently and pungently, met them so directly, and kept the logical principles of decent discussion so clearly to the fore.

Bernard de Mandeville's name is a famous one in the history of English Ethics. If not for the soundness of his thought, he is appreciated for the light-hearted, entertaining style of his *Fable of the Bees, or Private Vices Public Benefits*. If morality can be treated as an absurdity, Mandeville did it; and the second dialogue of *Alciphron* is a criticism of his writings, full of ingenious retorts and of arguments.

The third Earl of Shaftesbury developed the moral-sense theory of morality. Trying to disentangle morality from religion, he sought to give it an independent foundation in its own right. Berkeley saw in this only an attempt to reduce morality to a matter of taste. Whatever merit there may be in Berkeley's approach to moral problems, he failed to appreciate Shaftesbury's originality or his moral earnestness, concealed though this might have been behind a bantering attack on religion.

Having dealt with these two thinkers, Berkeley proceeds to emphasize the truth of Theism: that God exists and can be known. In the succeeding Dialogues he seeks to bring out the truth of Christianity by showing that its mysteries are not opposed to reason.

He attributes the vogue of free-thinking to a lack of proper education and so towards the conclusion of the book he suggests a Dianoetic Academy for freethinkers,

where, after seven years spent in silence and meditation, a man might commence [to become] a genuine free-thinker, and from that time forward have licence to think what he pleased, and a badge to distinguish him from counterfeits.

If this plan was too remote for realization, he suggested that at least a better education should be imparted, and this would consist in a study of the great minds of the past. If this were done, Berkeley thinks,

we should see that licentious humour, vulgarly called *free-thinking*, banished from the presence of gentlemen, together with ignorance and ill taste.

An emphasis on education has been the recurrent cry from reformers as well as conservatives, and one can appreciate Berkeley's faith in education as a lever to change the world. Two centuries after him we are still perplexed as to what the right education is. But there can be no denying that ultimately a good life is a matter of good education, and on this note this interesting work of Berkeley ends.

No review of this work could end without an appreciation of the scholarship and labour of the editor, Prof. T. E. Jessop. The standard set by the first volume has been fully kept up and he has earned the thanks of all who are interested in philosophy in general and Berkeley in particular.

A. R. WADIA

INDIA AND INDIAN LORE

The Vedic Age: The Bhāratīya Itihāsa Samiti's History and Culture of the Indian People. Vol. I. Edited by R. C. MAJUMDAR and A. D. PUSALKER. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 565 pp. 1951. 35s. Through the courtesy of the British Council Bombay).

The growing interest in historical research in the Indian universities, combined with the failure to co-ordinate those researches, has resulted in the effort now being made by three different organizations to produce three separate comprehensive histories of India on the lines of the Cambridge Modern History. The volume under review, produced under the auspices of the Bharatiya Itihasa Samiti, is the first in the field. Written entirely by Indians, its publication by a British firm is to be welcomed, as the British public is not familiar with the results of historical research by Indian scholars, many of whose "finds" are printed in comparatively obscure Indian journals. Professor Majumdar and his team of expert collaborators are to be congratulated on having produced the most readable and compact account so far published on the history of India from earliest times to the end of the Vedic age. All the available evidence on India's prehistoric past has been collected and summarized with great lucidity.

When it is remembered that not a single work of the Vedic period can be accurately dated, that the chronology of India has been built up from the identification of the Sandracottus of the Greek writers with Chandragupta Maurya, and that the earliest date known for certain in Indian history is the invasion of Alexander the Great in 326 B.C., some idea will be obtained of the difficulties with which the contributors to this volume have had to contend. Moreover, until 1922 no structural remains in India could be assigned with any degree of certainty to a period earlier than the third century B.C. and it is only within the last 30 years that excavations in the Indus Valley have unearthed remains of a civilization 5,000 years old. It therefore follows that the account of prehistoric India in this volume is chiefly conjectural and is an attempt to assess the value of the widely divergent and often fantastic theories based on these archæological remains. The vexed questions raised by the recent discoveries at Mohenjodaro and Harappa are soberly discussed and no finality is claimed by contributors for their conclusions, for it is not yet known whether the Indus Valley people came into contact with the Vedic Indians or how far their culture influenced that of post-Vedic Hinduism. Neither has any scholar yet succeeded in deciphering the Indus script.

After an introductory discussion on the relative value of the chief sources of Indian history, together with an account of the geological and geographical background, excellent summaries are provided of what is known of the Palæolithic, Neolithic and Copper Ages, the Indus Valley civilization, and the effect of the migrations into India of the Aryan peoples. Of outstanding importance are the contributions of Dr. B. K. Ghosh on language and literature, and of professor V. M. Apte

on religion and philosophy, political and legal institutions, and social and economic conditions. The development of Hindu theology is well treated and one is left with the conviction that in the Vedic hymns man feared the gods, in the Brahmanas he subdued the gods and feared God, and in the Upanishads he ignored the gods and became God.

C. COLLIN DAVIES

The Upanishads: Katha, Iśa, Kena and Mundaka, Translated by SWAMI NIKHILANANDA. (Phœnix House Ltd., London. xiii+319 pp. 1951. 16*s*.)

Swami Nikhilananda here gives us a translation of the *Katha, Iśa, Kena* and *Mundaka Upanishads*, with extracts from Śankara's commentary on each, in the Indian manner, each verse being immediately followed by its commentary, a good insurance against originality of interpretation, because it both biases the mind about what is to come and makes it hard to see works as wholes. Compare the common preoccupation with detail in Indian art. We say this because the Swami has the Indian attitude to the value of originality, that it is irrelevant, or at least infinitesimal compared to the value of truth, an attitude which many Westerners could profitably consider. Yet this is both the strength and the weakness of the book: it has been written before and will be written again.

The translation is good, and is prefaced by a comprehensive introduction, on the English style whereof the Swami is to be congratulated. It is clear, readable, not blighted by ornament, repetition or circumlocution, but is only an exposition, not a defence of orthodox Vedantism, although, like most orthodoxy, it will sacrifice truth to prestige unawares, *e.g.*, the Upanishads quite certainly are no more consistent than the Old Testament.

There is nothing dishonourable in claiming this; orthodoxy for its prestige chooses to assume (as in Orientalizing post-Roman Europe), that all writ has always been true. Yet Vedantic truth is timeless: hence the claim to truth in the past is utterly unnecessary: the only important point is that it should be true now. So, too, an unnecessary claim to supreme antiquity for all its writings—a prestige claim—is only likely to damage Hinduism, as it did strict Christianity. Historical method is after all a method for studying. Tradition, Hindu or other, is merely one of the many facts that are studied. Again, Tilak's date for the *Rig Veda* was an intelligent hypothesis by a good scholar. It is quite impossible to accept it today, and it should no longer be repeated, though certain magical practices may be as old. Yet even folklore on study proves surprisingly modern in its present form. We say this to make clear the limitations of a useful book, that the unwary may not be led astray by an able production.

RONALD N. SMITH

The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. By GOPINATH DHAWAN. Second, Revised Edition. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. 407 pp. 1951. Rs. 6/-)

Dr. Gopinath Dhawan orginally published this book in 1946, from Bombay. On a careful comparison, it

appears that the author has added paragraphs here and there, and modified his opinions in order to bring them in line with the later developments in Gandhiji's thought on political and economic questions. Thus, although the book has not changed in structure, it has gained materially on account of the above incorporation.

From one point of view, Dr. Dhawan's book should be considered as a very significant contribution to Gandhian literature. He has brought together a very large number of excerpts from Gandhiji's writings bearing upon his concept of the State, and the non-violent means through which this was to be brought into being. The rôle of the individual and of personal enterprise or responsibility in the matter of social change has also received due emphasis.

One cannot, however, escape the feeling that Dr. Dhawan has unconsciously underrated a certain point. Marxian and even non-Marxian scholars have often accused Gandhiji of Utopianism or religious obscurantism. They have described him as an impractical idealist; while Gandhiji's own claim was that he was a "practical idealist." It would perhaps have been better if Dr. Dhawan had kept in view some of these criticisms and tried to combat them wherever possible; without that, his description of Gandhiji's economic or political philosophy reads more like that of a partisan than as coming from the pen of a critical, though friendly, scientist.

This should not, however, obscure the fact that the book does contain answers to doubts, when these do not arise from a prejudiced mind. Only, they lie scattered here and there, instead of being brought together to meet effectively several possible objections.

Let us illustrate. In regard to national defence through non-violence, Dr. Dhawan quotes a writing from Gandhiji dated 1940 to the effect that, if a band of Satyagrahis stand against the aggressor,

> the unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery.

In later years, however, particularly after Noakhali and Bihar, Gandhiji slightly modified his position. He began to feel that perhaps the hardened heart of the wrong-doer might not yield in every case. But then, no wrong-doer works alone; he works in company with common men and women, his soldiery, whose hearts may not be as impervious as that of the leader, who is prejudiced with a purpose. Under such circumstances, the brave self-immolation of the Satyagrahis is likely to awaken a favourable response among the soldiery and leave the war-lord isolated with his evil. At least, this was the brave experiment which Gandhiji undertook in the dark days of Noakhali.

Gandhiji was never dogmatic, even with regard to the effectiveness of non-violence. He had faith, which is different from dogma, and could devise endless experiments to meet a difficulty in practice. He was thus more practical than merely "idealistic"; and a recital of his thoughts as expressed in the prayer-meetings in Noakhali can legitimately be expected to remove many honest doubts about the efficacy of Gandhiji's methods.

The book would perhaps have gained in value if the author had given us

a comparative study of War and Satyagraha, or the Marxian and the Gandhian techniques of revolution. But we may be wrong in this criticism. There is hardly any book about which one cannot say that it could have been made better if certain things had been done. So what we have said should not be taken as criticism but as a suggestion. As it is, Dr. Dhawan's book will stand as a monument of industry, and we believe that it will duly gain the recognition and the popularity which it justly deserves.

NIRMAL KUMAR BOSE

Caste: A Comparative Study. By A. M. HOCART; Foreword by LORD RAGLAN. (Methuen and Co., Ltd., London. xvi+156 pp. 1950. 15*s*.)

This excellent book on the caste system, the last work which the author completed before his death, not only throws new light on the problems of racial segregation and social integration but also serves as an eye-opener to those who even today have incorrect notions about the real origin and basis of the castes in the East, and particularly in India.

With his rich experience and vast knowledge Professor Hocart has spared no pains to show the existence of castes in countries other than India. It has been said somewhere in the Vedas that it is as impossible to trace the origin of the caste system as it is to find the foot-prints of a flying bird. But the author has shown us a way of detecting even those footprints. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is stated by the Lord that the four castes were created by Him according to merit and occupation. The *Mânava Dharmasâstra* also refers to the division of society into four main castes according to the occupation of the individuals concerned. It is significant that even in Manu's monumental work the classification into castes is applicable to the entire human race and not only to India and Indians.

This intricate problem has been approached by Professor Hocart in a spirit of scientific research. His close observation of and personal contact with social organizations and rituals in various countries of the East have given him the confidence and the courage to assert in unmistakable terms in his Preface :—

> The Indian caste system is not the isolated phenomenon it is often thought to be, but a species of a very widespread genus. Not being an isolated phenomenon, it cannot be understood in isolation ; it will merely be misunderstood. More than once it will be shown in these pages how localized specialism leads away from the truth and comparative study returns to it.

After proving with cogent reasoning that "castes are merely families to whom various offices in the ritual are assigned by heredity" the author rightly observes

> that the details of the caste system in India fit in perfectly well with the theory which makes it an organization for ritual, and that the alleged inconsistencies are misunderstandings on our part, misunderstandings which spring . . . from our ignorance of living institutions ; for when we examine these we shall find that they fully corroborate the ancient texts and that India has not changed as much as is often supposed.

The masterly treatment of the subject from beginning to end is remarkably brilliant and analytical. Every page presents a clear view of some part of the complicated structure of the caste system. The reader is struck

with wonder at the minute details and references which the author quotes. He is free from prejudice and therefore impartial in his conclusions. For instance, he rightly points out that there was a wider latitude in ancient times than at present and concludes that the origin of the caste system is twofold, *viz.*, family descent and sacrifice, the latter alone being essential.

The complex problem of the caste system has been dealt with in a concise and comprehensive manner and is presented in a simple, elegant and delightful style.

The publishers are to be congratulated for bringing out this valuable posthumous treatise. The get-up of the book is excellent.

K. S. NAGARAJAN

Sri Chaitanya (A Drama in Three Acts). By DILIP KUMAR ROY. (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Rs. 2/-)

Sri Chaitanya, regarded by his followers as an avatar of Sri Krishna, revived Vaishnavism in Bengal and gave it an impetus that was felt far and wide in the country. He lived a simple, uneventful life, the drama of which was spiritual. Dilip Kumar Roy, however, seems to be more interested in justifying Sanyasa than in portraying an inner dramatic conflict.

In the first Act the young convert to the Bhakti Cult announces to his mother his decision to renounce the world. In Act II we have a great debate on the relative merits of the *Jnana* and the *Bhakti "margas"* or modes of God-realization, and on the claims of "Dharma" as against those of Sanyasa. The author succeeds in transmuting into a lofty philosophical argument the rather trivial material of the traditional biographies in which this meeting between the great scholar, Keshava Bhatta Kashmiri and Sri Chaitanya is represented as a pedantic encounter in which the scholar is worsted, on petty points of rhetoric, by the young "enthusiast."

It is Act III, however, which shows genuine dramatic quality. By a fine device, through the vision of Vishnupriya, Sri Chaitanya's wife, we have a dramatic representation of the conversion of the two notorious ruffians, Jagai and Madhai, who were the Kotwals (local officials) of Navadwip town. Here again, there is a significant change for the better: whereas, in the original accounts, Sri Chaitanya overpowers the villians with the terror of Vishnu's "Chakra," here he wins them over with his love.

No doubt, the poetic medium is appropriate to the theme, but the author's command of the medium is very uncertain, particularly on the metrical side. The play will remain an academic effort, caviar to the general reader.

G. C. BANNERJEE

Shri Sant Shreshtha Tukaram Maharajkrat, Shrimad Bhagavad-Gitecha Abhangatmak Anuvad, athava Mantra Gita. Edited by V. S. BENDREY. Marathi. (S. R. Sardesai, Navin Smartha Vidyalaya; 41 Buddhwar, Poona 2, 115+243 pp. 1950. Rs. 5/-)

A welcome addition to the Marathi literature on the life and work of Sant Tukaram. Shri V. S. Bendrey has done a valuable service by publishing the original verses of the *Gita*, side by side

with Shri Tukaram's metric version of each in lucid Marathi. The book runs to some 240 pages, and has two indices, one indexing the verses in Sanskrit, as in the original *Gita*, and the other the *Abhangas*. The editor has prefaced his effort with an introduction extending over 115 pages. He has taken pains to show how the *Abhangas*, faithfully translating the *Gita* and catching its true spirit, were collected by several research-workers and that they are the genuine work of Tukaram.

In his own inimitable way, Shri Tukaram makes each *Abhanga* shine with the spiritual experience garnered in his own life. No wonder, then, as the author points out in the Preface, that his *Abhangas* have helped quite a few writers on the *Gita*, including the late Lokamanya Tilak.

Shri Tukaram is known for his *Abhangas*. Some critics may ask for further proof as to the metric version being his genuine work; these may contend that the verses do not conform to the metre of Tukaram, that they lack the usual *Abhangha* style. None-the-less the book, with its evidence that the allegedly illiterate Tukaram had the *Gita* as his source of inspiration, will come as a revelation to many.

D. R. K.

The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge: A Critical Study of Some Problems of Logic and Metaphysics. By SATISCHANDRA CHATTERJEE, M.A., PH.D. Second Edition. (The University of Calcutta. xix + 387 pp. 1950. Rs. 8/8)

Knowledge being the distinctive possession of man, an inquiry into the nature and forms of knowledge is of value. The Naiyāyikas of ancient and mediæval India, like Aristotle and the scholastic logicians of the West, made a thoroughgoing investigation into the forms of human knowledge. Dr. Chatterjee has very successfully attempted to give a complete account and a critical estimate of the theory of knowledge according to Nyāya.

The book, though not directly concerned with the historical development, covers the history of Nyāya philosophy beginning with Gautama's *Nyāya-Sutra* and ending with the *Navya-Nyāya* of Annam Bhatta, Vishvanath and others. In comparing the Nyāya views with the similar doctrines in Western philosophy, the author has been careful to bring out the originality and the difference of emphasis which give the Nyāya theories their distinctive and individual character.

When Realism is gaining ground in the West, this critical and comparative study of the realistic philosophy of Nyāya is bound to be of immense value in promoting the study of Indian philosophy in the East as well as in the West.

D. G. LONDHEY

Life in Ancient India: Studies in Rig Vedic India. By ADOLF KAEGI; translated by R. ARROWSMITH, PH.D. (Susil Gupta (India), Ltd., Calcutta. 120 pp. 1950)

"Life in Ancient India" seems something of a misnomer for this very interesting and well-written translation from the German. The book is about Vedic literature in general and the *Rig Veda* in particular; such light as it throws on the life of the early Aryans

seems incidental. It is well worth reading, however; the translations of the Vedic hymns bring out their grandeur.

There is no indication by the publishers that the book is a reprint or a new edition, but a translation by Arrowsmith of *The Rigveda* by Kaegi was published in 1886.

E. M. H.

Buddhist India. By T. W. RHYS-DAVIDS, LL.D., PH.D. First Indian Edition. (Susil Gupta (India), Ltd., Calcutta. 226 + xviii pp. Illustrated. 1950)

First published in 1902, this standard work of a leading Pali scholar makes valuable points, while surprisingly denying the Brahmin persecution of Buddhism. Dr. Rhys-Davids wisely repudiates the misleading division between Northern and Southern Buddhism. His genuine interest in Buddhism cannot be doubted, but the tone of his concession to the writers of the early Buddhist period of

> really on the whole a surprisingly able grasp of the deepest problems of life

gives a clue to the failure of meticulous scholarship in general to glimpse the inwardness of Buddhism, its inspiration as a Way of Life.

This first Indian edition is attractively got-up, though the reproductions are rather disappointing.

E. M. H.

India's Culture through the Ages. By MOHAN LAL VIDYARTHI. (Tapeshwari Sahitya Mandir, Kanpur. 382+xvii pp. 1951. Rs. 5/-)

The subtitle, "A detailed analysis of the origin, development and spirit of Indian culture from the very beginning up to the first half of the twentieth century," gives a clue to the contents of the book, which seems intended primarily for students. As such, it has an academic value, though the author, whose ardent love for his country's culture cannot be doubted, lays no claim to originality in his treatment of the subject.

Parts I and II present panoramas of the ancient and mediæval periods, respectively. The canvas is sometimes far too crowded but for the most part the reader is kept aware of the motif and master-key of the Indian mind, that which finds expression in religion, philosophy, art, literature, social institutions, manners, etc., an all-embracing spirituality, not spirituality of the "metaphysical, dreamy, unpractical, other-worldly and escapist kind."

A serviceable publication for the general student of Indian culture, though a little more coherence and compactness would have enhanced its usefulness.

G. M.

Indo-Iranian Studies I: A General Account of Iranistic and other Studies. By J. C. TAVADIA, DR. PHIL. (Hamburg). (95+vii pp. Rs. 5/-); *Rubaiyat-i-Sarmad.* Edited and translated by FAZL MAHMUD ASIRI, M.A. (108 + xxviii pp. Rs. 6/-). (Visva-Bharati Studies Nos. 10 and 11, Visva-Bharati Publishing Department, Calcutta. 1950)

These two works testify to the vitality of the international university founded over a quarter of a century ago by the poet Rabindranath Tagore to serve as a guest-house for world culture.

The first brochure is the first of three studies planned by the author, a research scholar of standing, on Indo-Iranian research, namely, the need for co-operative study; Iranian studies in India and in the West; Iranian and "Islamic" Studies; Zarathustra's Path of Peace; some gleanings from Al-Birūni; some remarks on a Sanskrit-Chinese glossary, with special reference to Iranian words therein; and a didactic poem in Zoroastrian Pahlavi.

Dr. Tavadia's plea that research in the field of Indo-Iranian culture be carried on in strict accord with the rules of the game, so to speak, is both passionate and powerful. The subsequent studies in the series from his pen will be eagerly awaited.

The second brochure gives a biographical sketch of "Sarmad" (Muhammad Sa'id), an eminent poet of Kashan (Persia), who came to India and met a tragic end at Delhi in 1660 A.D., due to his friendship with Dara Shikuh and his catholicity of views on religion, particularly Islam. See, for example, his last (334th) *rubai* (quatrain) in the present collection :—

O Sarmad, thou hast won a great name in the world,
Since thou hast turned away from infidelity to Islam;
What wrong was there in God and His Prophet,
That thou hast become a disciple of Lachhman and Rama?

The *rubais* run the usual gamut of Sufistic thought: God's immanence, renunciation of the world, Divine mercy, etc. In style and diction Sarmad is considered by critics to be superior to Omar Khayyam. And, though the present English translation nowhere comes up to Fitzgerald's literary rendering of Omar Khayyam's *rubais*, it yet provides a basis for a better version, marked by literary luminosity, later on. His research in rescuing Sarmad from oblivion entitles the editor to the sincere thanks of all students of Persian literature.

G. M.

The Story of Prehistoric Civilizations. By DOROTHY DAVISON. (C. A. Watts and Co., Ltd., London. xiv + 266 pp. 1951. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

This simple but attractive book for the intelligent layman fills a gap in the literature about prehistory. The author has wisely introduced into the closely compacted, yet very readable volume as many illustrations, charts and maps as possible, to help the reader's imagination. The arrangement of the matter—much of it gathered, like the illustrations, from learned journals not readily accessible—makes for easy reference, without being dry and tabulated. The field covered includes the pre-civilizations of the Near East, the early European and Mediterranean cultures and the British Isles.

Naturally the dating and interpretation are far from definitive. The value of the book is that it gives in brief the present results of research. The author mentions many unsolved problems, the obvious magical significance of decorative and constructional details, now ordinarily unintelligible, and the variations of racial development; even neighbouring peoples belonged to different "Ages." Incidentally, these points were all elucidated by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine* in 1888.

But whether one adopts the views of the orthodox anthropoarchæologists, or is prepared to extend the chronology of civilization and to investigate the claims for the existence of Atlantis (and of an esoteric religious tradition and an inherited working knowledge of "magic," such as that by which the giant stone structures were erected), the book is of real interest in helping to fill in the picture.

E. W.

A History of the Political Philosophers. By GEORGE CATLIN. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. xviii + 802 pp. 1951. 30s.)

By "the political philosophers" Professor Catlin means the Western political philosophers. His book contains no mention of any Eastern thinker later than Confucius. Even so, it suffers from the attempt to cover too much ground. It has the virtue neither of an encyclopædia to which one can turn for an account of a particular theorist, since exposition is everywhere mingled with criticism; nor of a good history, since the main trends of political thought are lost to sight in the accumulation of detail. Much of this detail, moreover, appears to have settled on the pages like gravel, jerked from an overloaded cart, sorely taxing the patience of the reader already boneshaken by an uneven style.

There is, Professor Catlin contends, a "Grand Tradition" in political philosophy, rationalistic, humanistic, essentially liberal, extending from Plato and Aristotle through Aquinas to Russell, which finds its sanction in the "astoundingly uniform" teaching of the sages with respect to the end of life, and expression in the great concept of Natural Law. A neo-Thomist himself, he is at his best in tracing the development of this concept at the hands of thinkers great and small. There is material here for a first-class history.

If, however, we define sagacity in advance, and then proceed to deny the epithet "sage" to all who dispute our definition, the consensus among those that remain can hardly be called astounding, and still less can it legitimately be invoked to discredit the non-conforming minority. Professor Catlin overlooks this. He neither admits his partiality for the Grand Tradition to be, in the last resort, a matter of taste, nor justifies it in the face of its critics. On the contrary, to all who stand outside it he is not merely unsympathetic but cavalier and frequently unjust. His misrepresentation of Rousseau is particularly grotesque. He does not even scorn the argument *ad hominem.*

F. A. LEA

ENDS AND SAYINGS

"_____ *ends of verse*
And sayings of philosophers."
HUDIBRAS

The coming of the monsoon to India underlines the seriousness of the housing problem, the nature and extent of which in South and Southeast Asia was recently investigated by the United Nations Tropical Housing Mission. Some of their disquieting findings were summarized a few months ago in United Nations Press Release SOC-1120. It brought out, for example, the shocking overcrowding in the area, stating that

> more than 100 million Asian families—perhaps as many as 150 million—live in crowded, insanitary, sub-standard quarters.

"The home," Abraham Lincoln declared, "is the corner-stone of our civilization, the source of our strength and glory." Four walls do not, of course, make a home, but they constitute an almost indispensable setting for any family life worthy of the name. The denial of privacy to the family group is not the least disservice of overcrowding, to its victims and to society.

Not only in India and Pakistan, where conditions are aggravated by the great influx of refugees, but also in Malaya, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, the discomfort which this great segment of the population is enduring, especially in the cities, beggars imagination.

In India, the monsoon brings not only fertility to the fields and welcome relief to sweltering slum inhabitants; simultaneously it makes more acute the misery of the thousands of urban pavement dwellers and those condemned by economic circumstances to the diminutive, quickly sodden shacks which offer but a token shelter from the elements and must help to swell the death-toll of preventable disease.

No wonder the Mission found the housing in some Asian countries "second only to the food problem." It recognized the will on the part of the Indian Government, for example, to improve conditions, but found research needed and a lack of the technical staff to carry out large ameliorative plans. The Mission, while conceding such honourable exceptions as the steel industry at Jamshedpur, is constrained to point out the fallacy of assuming "that better housing follows economic development automatically." In other words, the problem is not fundamentally an economic one. The economic and technological aspects of the problem, however important, are ancillary. We submit that the basic reason for this appalling situation is the absence of the will to solve the difficulty on the part of the people as a whole. There can be facile acquiescence in others' remediable misery only in the absence of conviction of the fundamental unity of the human family, in other words, of the *fact* of universal brotherhood.

Mr. Torres Bodet, in his Report as Director-General to the Sixth Session

of Unesco's General Conference, convened at Paris on June 14th, recognized frankly that the present political tension was not only spreading anxiety but also setting bounds to mutual sympathies, and making it more difficult for the peoples of the world even to desire friendly relations. The General Conference could not, he said, afford to ignore the problems arising from the increasing political colour that was being given to philosophy, values, cultural expression and even scientific speculation. It had been made clearer than ever before that success in carrying out the mission of Unesco, with the new tasks involved, depended "upon the 'joint will' of the Member States."

But the "will" of each Member State is the "joint will" of its citizens. Unesco's practical venture into the creation of a world network of regional centres for fundamental education was, Mr. Bodet explained, directed to lessening the insecurity caused by the majority of the world's people being beyond the reach of even elementary education. That these should be ignorant of the most rudimentary modern techniques is understandable but even primitive peoples, to say nothing of the illiterate masses of a country of hoary culture such as India, are happily not without their moral values, however cut off from the invigorating currents of cultural exchange and global thinking. Otherwise the "stable, genuine and just peace" towards which Unesco works would be indeed a dream and the "new era," in which Dr. Bodet reaffirmed his faith, a vanishing mirage.

But there is one aspect of the Unesco work to which the attention of Mr. Bodet and his able staff should be drawn. The Paris headquarters of Unesco are well knit, as they should be, with the National governments through their respective National Commissions. But the departments of Unesco at Paris should also cultivate, as much as possible, direct contacts with non-official agencies and popular organizations working along the lines of Unesco's programme and policy. We know that this is not altogether neglected but it needs to be done on a larger scale. This will avoid the risk of the danger of totalitarian forces creeping into the educational and cultural work of nations and thus killing the initiative of private enterprise and personal philanthropy.

It is for us to recall and to prove by every one of our decisions the great truth expressed by a philosopher in a century which believed in the nobility of man: "The first and fundamental law of nature is to seek peace and pursue it."

—JAIME TORRES BODET